CONFIDENCE BUILDING IN THE ARMS CONTROL PROCESS: *A Transformation View*

by
James Macintosh
Canadian Security Research

prepared for

The Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament Division
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

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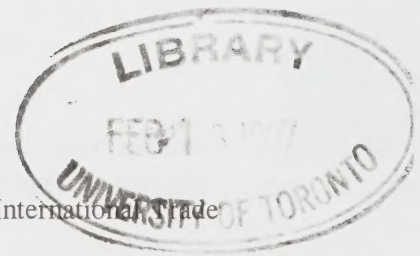

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PREFACE

Confidence building has become a prominent fixture in the international peace and security landscape. In part this is explained by the apparent success that the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) has enjoyed in easing tensions on that continent and in facilitating the peaceful transition from the Cold War era. In part it may be due also to the frustration that many policy makers and analysts feel with other security management approaches for dealing with the difficult conflicts of other regions of the world. Perhaps it reflects as well what may be currently fashionable in diplomatic circles. As such a prominent approach for addressing serious threats to international peace and security, confidence building warrants continued careful thought and analysis.

James Macintosh, an internationally recognized expert on the subject of confidence building, is well qualified to undertake a review of the basic thinking that underpins the approach. The author of a key study on the subject in 1985 entitled *Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective*, he has participated as an expert advisor on the Canadian delegations to several meetings in the context of the CSCE/OSCE, as well as explored confidence building in a variety of other regional contexts including the Korean Peninsula and the Middle East. Currently, he is engaged in a study on the utility of a confidence building approach in the Caribbean region. Mr. Macintosh has also contributed useful analyses of how confidence building measures may be applied in specific arms control contexts, including the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (the Inhumane Weapons Convention), and outer space.

In this report, Mr. Macintosh provides an insightful overview of the confidence building process. He offers some useful suggestions for improving the prospects of the successful application of confidence building. In view of the attention that this approach to security management has received and its potential utility, this report provides a timely and valuable contribution to discussions in this field.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBM	Confidence building measure
CSBM	Confidence and security building measure
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
MBFR	Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (Talks)
NTM	National technical means
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (formerly known as CSCE)
WTO	Warsaw Treaty Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Confidence Building in the Arms Control Process: A Transformation View sees conventional understandings of confidence building as incomplete and focuses on why and how developing confidence building arrangements can help to improve security relations. The transformation view shifts attention away from operational measures towards the processes associated with their development and application.

Confidence building, according to the transformation view, is a distinct activity undertaken by policy makers with the minimum intention of improving some aspects of a traditionally antagonistic security relationship through security policy coordination and cooperation. It entails the comprehensive process of exploring, negotiating, and then implementing tailored measures, including those that promote interaction, information exchange, and constraint. It also entails the development and use of both formal and informal practices and principles associated with the cooperative development of CBMs. When conditions are supportive, the confidence building process can *facilitate, focus, synchronize, amplify, and generally structure the potential for a significant positive transformation in the security relations of participating states*. Thus, the confidence building process involves more than simply the production of a confidence building agreement and definitely should not be confused with what CBMs do.

The serious pursuit of legitimate confidence building arrangements, according to the transformation view, is an activity that is particularly well-suited to fostering positive changes in security thinking (transformation) when conditions are supportive. This is due to the activity's fundamentally cooperative character and the reinforcing nature of the confidence building measures that comprise an arrangement. Confidence building, because of its basic character, is able to facilitate and structure the potential for change in security relationships when at least some states are dissatisfied with, and beginning to question, *status quo* security policies and approaches.

A particularly important dimension of the transformation view is the proposition that the changes in security thinking facilitated by confidence building can become institutionalized as a collection of new rules and practices stipulating how participating states should cooperate and compete with each other in their security relationship. This restructured relationship redefines expectations of normal behaviour among participating states. Without at least a modest transformation of basic security expectations flowing from its application, it is difficult to see how confidence building can improve basic security relations in meaningful ways.

Successful confidence building requires interaction amongst officials and experts from participating states, when conditions are supportive of change. The process of confidence building permits them to formulate and then institutionalize new, more positive ideas, practices, and principles defining their security relations and how to maintain them. The necessary supporting conditions include:

(1) "security management fatigue";
(2) unease and dissatisfaction with *status quo* security policies;
(3) concern about the domestic costs of maintaining the *status quo*;
(4) a group of experts (an epistemic community);
(5) a new generation of more flexible and sophisticated policy makers;
(6) a forum for discussion and interaction; and
(7) perhaps, a "leap of faith" initiative by at least one key senior policy maker that is capable of crossing a key emotional and conceptual threshold.

Confidence building appears to offer considerable promise as a security management approach. However, this potential cannot be fully realized unless a policy-relevant and conceptually sound

understanding of the confidence building process and how it works animates application efforts. Relying on the traditional "minimalist" accounts of confidence building, with their tendency to reify the operational content of confidence building measures as the essence of "confidence building", is unlikely to provide much help. This approach, in particular, does not speak to the conditions that should be in place for effective confidence building to occur and lacks a convincing account of why and how adopting these measures will improve security relations. Coining new variants that rely implicitly on traditional reasoning or employ understandings that are excessively broad will not help either, because typically they lack a conceptual foundation. Confidence building should be seen as a process and not be equated with CBMs and what they do.

A number of policy implications flow from the transformation view of confidence building.

1) Understand the Opportunities and Limitations of Confidence Building:

Sponsors and participants will be more likely to enjoy success in employing the confidence building approach to change security relationships if they have a clearer, conceptually-based understanding of how it works and under what circumstances. Confidence building has specific requirements, objectives, and associated methods capable of achieving those objectives; all of which require clear articulation.

2) Distinguish Between Confidence Building Process and CBMs:

Policy makers should not mistake the adoption of CBM-like measures for confidence building. The latter clearly is a *process* and it is this process dimension of confidence building that helps policy makers to restructure security relationships, rendering them more cooperative in character and less likely to lead to conflict and misperception. As a result, policy makers should concentrate increasingly on identifying when change is possible and on developing cooperative security arrangements when conditions are supportive. They should concentrate less on CBM package design, which will flow naturally from the effort to develop cooperative solutions. Analysts should concentrate more on understanding the role of supporting conditions and on explaining the nature of the confidence building process rather than focussing on CBMs and what they do.

3) Encourage Policy Relevant Research:

A better understanding by policy makers of the strengths and limitations of confidence building is essential to ensure that they make the most productive use of this security management approach and do not become disillusioned because of the approach's misapplication. Fostering this understanding requires more policy relevant research into confidence building. Such research should include both case studies of new applications -- both in new geographic regions and in new issue areas -- as well as generic studies of the confidence building process itself. Analysts and policy makers, particularly in various regional contexts, need to work closely to ensure that the explanations of confidence building make sense from a policy perspective and accurately capture what really occurs during successful confidence building. The transformation view suggests some of the issues that should concern analysts and policy makers as they pursue this goal.

4) Recognize the Importance of Supporting Conditions and Foster Them Where Possible:

An important policy implication flowing from the transformation view is the need to gauge when conditions are present that can support confidence building efforts. Imposing or encouraging confidence building before participants are ready for change is unlikely to lead to successful outcomes. Some supporting conditions may be more amenable to influence than others. A corollary deriving from the importance of these supporting conditions and the limited ability to influence some of them is that the timing of confidence building initiatives matters very much. Confidence building should not be viewed as a panacea, capable of improving antagonistic security relations before potential participants are ready for constructive change.

5) Encourage Development of Expert Groups and Discussion Forums:

Another important policy implication associated with the transformation view is the need for interested parties to encourage epistemic community growth. Including governmental links with this community and the participation of military and defence officials is critical. The presence of an effective transnational epistemic community appears to be an extremely constructive factor in initiating and structuring the confidence building process. A group of recognized experts can provide interested policy makers who are dissatisfied with *status quo* security relationships with a useful, new understanding of "the problem" and a promising way of addressing it. The process of encouraging national and regional experts groups can also help policy makers to recognize emerging dissatisfaction with *status quo* security policy approaches and in this way encouraging epistemic community development can indirectly affect the emergence of some other supporting conditions.

Expert communities as well as governmental officials require appropriate forums -- both formal and informal -- for discussion and interaction. This is another supporting condition that seems likely to be amenable to deliberate influence, either by potential participants or by interested third parties.

6) A Role for Interested Third Parties:

There is a special role for interested third parties, particularly in encouraging the development of genuine epistemic communities. International organizations such as the United Nations, research organizations, and interested governments with some competence in this area might make important contributions to confidence building thinking and its promotion across borders. They might, for example, actively promote workshops and seminars where experts and government officials can develop a keener understanding of how confidence building works. They might also help acquaint interested states and regional experts with various cost-effective, operational approaches such as cooperative monitoring that can play a useful role in supporting both traditional and non-traditional confidence building efforts.

As confidence building becomes better understood in a variety of application contexts, it may be appropriate to revise our understanding of it. Each new application of confidence building may differ in key ways, obliging us to reconsider what we once thought was essential to its basic character. The transformation view is relatively well-suited to facilitating such revision because it places confidence building within a broader institutional framework and separates CBMs from the processes associated with their development. One attractive possibility is the case of efforts to expand our thinking on confidence building to encompass non-traditional security regimes that already exhibit cooperative characteristics ("confidence expanding"). *Confidence Building in the Arms Control Process: A Transformation View* is intended as a constructive step to help move this on-going process of understanding confidence building forward.

RÉSUMÉ

Le renforcement de la confiance (et de la sécurité) dans le processus de contrôle des armements : une optique de transformation repose sur l'idée que les théories traditionnelles en la matière sont incomplètes et explique pourquoi et comment l'élaboration d'accords visant à renforcer la confiance peut contribuer à améliorer les relations de sécurité. L'optique de transformation exposée ci-après permet de recentrer l'attention en passant des mesures opérationnelles aux processus associés à leur élaboration et à leur mise en oeuvre.

Le renforcement de la confiance, dans une optique de transformation, est une activité distincte qu'entreprennent les décideurs publics en ayant au minimum l'intention d'améliorer certains aspects d'une relation de sécurité traditionnellement antagoniste, grâce à la coordination et à la coopération en matière de politiques de sécurité. Cela suppose un processus exhaustif d'exploration, de négociation et de mise en oeuvre d'initiatives conçues «sur mesure», notamment pour promouvoir l'interaction, l'échange d'informations et la contrainte. Cela suppose également l'élaboration et l'application de pratiques et de principes à la fois formels et informels pour l'élaboration en coopération de MCS. Lorsque les circonstances s'y prêtent, le processus de renforcement de la confiance peut *faciliter, concentrer, synchroniser, amplifier et, de manière générale, structurer le potentiel de transformation positive et en profondeur des relations de sécurité des États participants*. Ainsi, le processus de renforcement de la confiance ne consiste pas simplement à produire un accord et ne doit en aucun cas être confondu avec les MCS.

Dans l'optique de transformation, la poursuite résolue d'arrangements légitimes de renforcement de la confiance est une activité particulièrement bien adaptée à l'obtention de changements positifs quant à la manière dont on pense (transforme) la sécurité lorsque les conditions sont favorables. Cela s'explique par le caractère foncièrement coopératif de l'activité et par l'effet de soutien mutuel des mesures de renforcement de la confiance composant l'arrangement. Du fait de sa nature intrinsèque, le renforcement de la confiance peut faciliter et structurer le potentiel de changement des relations de sécurité lorsque certains États au moins sont insatisfaits du *statu quo* des politiques et des méthodes et commencent à le remettre en question.

Un aspect particulièrement important de l'optique de transformation est l'idée que les changements dans la manière dont on pense la sécurité, facilités par le renforcement de la confiance, peuvent être institutionnalisés sous forme de nouvel ensemble de règles et de pratiques stipulant comment les États participants devraient coopérer et se faire concurrence dans leurs relations de sécurité. Ces relations restructurées redéfinissent ce que l'on considère comme un comportement normal entre États. Si l'on ne parvient pas à transformer, ne serait-ce que modestement, les attentes des États sur le plan de la sécurité grâce au renforcement de la confiance, on voit mal comment le processus pourrait améliorer sérieusement les relations fondamentales de sécurité.

Le succès du renforcement de la confiance exige une interaction entre les hauts fonctionnaires et les experts des États participants, lorsque les conditions sont favorables au changement. Le processus de renforcement de la confiance leur permet de formuler puis d'institutionnaliser des idées, pratiques et principes nouveaux et plus positifs pour définir et entretenir leurs relations de sécurité. Les conditions favorables nécessaires comprennent :

(1) une «lassitude» sur la gestion de la sécurité;
(2) un malaise et une insatisfaction envers le *statu quo* en matière de politiques de sécurité;
(3) des récriminations au sujet du coût intérieur de maintien du *statu quo*;
(4) un groupe d'experts (une communauté épistémique);

(5) une nouvelle génération de politiciens plus souples et plus éclairés;
(6) une tribune de débat et d'interaction; et,
(7) peut-être, une initiative représentant un «acte de foi» d'au moins un politicien important capable de franchir un seuil émotif et conceptuel clé.

Le renforcement de la confiance semble très prometteur comme démarche de gestion de la sécurité. Toutefois, ce potentiel ne pourra être pleinement exploité tant que les efforts ne reposeront pas sur une compréhension du processus et de son fonctionnement qui soit pertinente sur le plan des politiques et saine sur le plan des concepts. S'en remettre à la démarche «minimaliste» traditionnelle, qui a tendance à réifier le contenu opérationnel des mesures de renforcement de la confiance envisagées comme l'essence même de la démarche, risque de ne pas être très utile. C'est en effet une démarche qui ne tient pas compte des conditions indispensables pour un renforcement de la confiance efficace et qui ne dit pas de manière convaincante pourquoi et comment l'adoption de ces mesures va améliorer les relations de sécurité. Et concocter de nouvelles variantes, se fondant implicitement sur le raisonnement traditionnel ou sur des ententes trop générales, ne sera pas plus efficace car elles sont typiquement dépourvues de fondements théoriques. Le renforcement de la confiance doit être envisagé comme un processus et non pas être assimilé aux MCS et à ce qu'elles font.

Plusieurs conséquences découlent de l'optique de transformation, en ce qui concerne les politiques publiques.

1) Comprendre les atouts et les limites du renforcement de la confiance

Les partisans et participants auront plus de chances de succès dans leur recours à la démarche de renforcement de la confiance pour transformer les relations de sécurité s'ils se font une idée très claire et conceptuellement solide de ce qui marche bien, et dans quelles circonstances. Le renforcement de la confiance correspond à des exigences et objectifs précis et exige des méthodes capables de faire atteindre ces objectifs; tout cela doit être clairement explicité.

2) Faire la distinction entre le renforcement de la confiance et les MCS

Les décideurs doivent bien se garder de confondre renforcement de la confiance et adoption de mesures ressemblant à des MCS. Le renforcement de la confiance est clairement un *processus* et c'est précisément cela qui aide les décideurs à restructurer les relations de sécurité de façon à en accentuer l'aspect coopératif et à réduire les risques de conflit et de malentendu. En conséquence, ils devraient se concentrer de plus en plus sur l'identification des moments où le changement devient possible et sur l'élaboration d'accords de sécurité coopératifs lorsque les conditions sont réunies. Ils devraient s'attacher moins à l'élaboration d'un ensemble de MCS, évolution qui serait toute naturelle s'ils s'efforçaient de trouver des solutions axées sur la coopération. Les analystes, quant à eux, devraient s'attacher plus à comprendre le rôle des conditions favorables et à expliquer la nature du processus de renforcement de la confiance qu'aux MCS et à ce qu'elles font.

3) Encourager des recherches pertinentes du point de vue de l'élaboration des politiques

Il est essentiel que les décideurs comprennent mieux les atouts et les limites du renforcement de la confiance pour s'assurer qu'ils font l'usage le plus productif possible de cette démarche de gestion de la sécurité, et qu'ils ne pas désillusionnent pas si la démarche est mal appliquée. Favoriser cette attitude exige que l'on consacre au renforcement de la confiance plus de recherches pertinentes du point de vue de l'élaboration des politiques. Ces recherches devraient englober à la fois des études de cas sur les nouvelles applications -- tant dans de nouvelles régions du monde que dans de nouveaux secteurs thématiques -- ainsi que des études génériques sur le processus lui-même. Analystes et décideurs politiques, surtout dans divers contextes régionaux, devraient collaborer étroitement pour veiller à ce que l'explication du renforcement de la confiance soit cohérente du point de vue des politiques

publiques et exprime avec exactitude ce qui passe vraiment lorsque le renforcement de la confiance réussit. L'optique de la transformation fait ressortir certaines des questions qui devraient intéresser analystes et décideurs oeuvrant dans ce but.

4) Admettre l'importance des conditions favorables et les stimuler le plus possible

L'une des conséquences importantes de l'optique de transformation, sur le plan des politiques publiques, est la nécessité de bien juger quand sont réunies les conditions susceptibles de soutenir les efforts de renforcement de la confiance. Imposer ou encourager le renforcement de la confiance avant que les participants ne soient prêts risque peu de réussir. Et certaines conditions indispensables sont peut-être plus faciles à stimuler que d'autres. Une corollaire de l'importance de ces conditions favorables et de notre aptitude limitée à en stimuler certaines est que le moment des initiatives de renforcement de la confiance est un facteur primordial. On ne doit pas considérer le renforcement de la confiance comme une panacée qui permettrait d'améliorer des relations de sécurité antagonistes avant que les parties ne soient vraiment prêtes à un changement constructif.

5) Favoriser la création de groupes d'experts et de tribunes de débat

Autre conséquence non négligeable de l'optique de la transformation, toujours du point de vue de l'élaboration des politiques : la nécessité pour les parties intéressées de stimuler la création de communautés épistémiques, auxquelles il est d'ailleurs crucial d'intégrer des représentants des gouvernements ainsi que des forces militaires et de la défense. Il semble que la présence d'une communauté épistémique transnationale efficace soit un facteur extrêmement positif pour lancer et structurer le processus de renforcement de la confiance. Un groupe d'experts réputés pourrait fournir aux décideurs publics intéressés qui en ont assez du *statu quo* des relations de sécurité une lecture originale et utile du «problème», de façon à l'aborder sous un angle prometteur. Favoriser l'éclosion de tels groupes d'experts nationaux et régionaux pourrait aussi aider les décideurs à saisir les signes précurseurs du désenchantement que suscite le *statu quo* des relations de sécurité et, par là-même, stimuler l'apparition d'une communauté épistémique pourrait contribuer indirectement à l'émergence d'autres conditions favorables.

Groupes d'experts et agents gouvernementaux ont cependant besoin de tribunes adéquates -- formelles et informelles -- de débat et d'interaction. Cela constitue une autre des conditions favorables sur lesquelles on -- c'est-à-dire les participants éventuels ou de tierces parties intéressées -- devrait pouvoir exercer une influence bénéfique.

6) Le rôle des tierces parties

Les tierces parties ont un rôle spécial à jouer, surtout pour favoriser l'éclosion de véritables communautés épistémiques. Des organisations internationales comme les Nations unies, des centres de recherche et des gouvernements intéressés ayant une certaine compétence en la matière pourraient apporter une contribution non négligeable à la réflexion sur le renforcement de la confiance et à sa promotion internationale. Ils pourraient par exemple contribuer activement à la tenue d'ateliers et de colloques où des experts et des représentants gouvernementaux pourraient affiner leur compréhension du fonctionnement du renforcement de la confiance. Ils pourraient en outre aider les États intéressés et les experts régionaux à chercher des méthodes efficientes et opérationnelles, comme la surveillance coopérative, qui peuvent appuyer efficacement les efforts traditionnels et non traditionnels de renforcement de la confiance.

Si le renforcement de la confiance finit par être mieux compris dans ses divers contextes d'application, nous devrons peut-être en revoir notre compréhension fondamentale. Chaque nouvelle application du renforcement de la confiance peut différer des autres à des égards importants, ce qui nous obligera à réexaminer ce que l'on croyait jusque là foncièrement essentiel. L'optique de transformation se prête relativement bien à une telle remise en question car elle situe le renforcement de la confiance dans un cadre institutionnel plus large et distingue clairement les MCS des processus associés à leur formulation.

L'une des possibilités attrayantes concerne les efforts que nous déployons pour étendre notre champ de réflexion sur le renforcement de la confiance afin d'y intégrer les régimes de sécurité non traditionnels qui témoignent déjà de caractéristiques de coopération («expansion de la confiance»). *Le renforcement de la confiance (et de la sécurité) dans le processus de contrôle des armements : une optique de transformation* a pour ambition de contribuer à l'avancement de ce processus continu de compréhension du renforcement de la confiance.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Confidence Building in the Arms Control Process: A Transformation View is a predominately conceptual exploration of the confidence building approach to security management. Although it begins with a critical review of traditional confidence building ideas (including some developed by the author twelve years ago), its primary aim is the articulation of a general contemporary account of the confidence building approach. The critical review highlights some problems that continue to undermine conventional treatments of confidence building. The transformation view presented in this report is intended to address these problems, yielding a more accurate and useful account of the confidence building approach.

Confidence building, according to the argument developed in the pages that follow, is a distinctive type of security management activity entailing the comprehensive process of exploring, negotiating, and then implementing information, interaction, and constraint measures according to predominantly cooperative practices and principles. However, it also can involve more than developing agreements featuring well-known confidence building measures (CBMs). When conditions are supportive, engaging in the confidence building process can *facilitate, focus, and amplify the potential for a positive transformation in the security relations of participating states no longer satisfied with* status quo *security policies*. This transformation, which can affect a narrow range of security concerns or a much broader range of security issues, involves a restructuring of ideas about at least some aspects of security policies and the basic nature of security relations. According to the transformation view, the confidence building process is particularly well-suited to structuring and helping to institutionalize this potential for change according to generally cooperative principles.

Because of its basic nature, confidence building is a potentially powerful security management approach that, when pursued thoughtfully and under the right conditions, can help foster significant positive changes in the way suspicious states view each other. Indeed, because of its characteristics, confidence building may be unique amongst security management approaches in its capacity to facilitate constructive changes in security thinking.

Significant positive change, however, is neither automatic nor inevitable. Unless the key *supporting conditions* have developed, suspicions will endure and confidence building efforts will accomplish little beyond the symbolic or rhetorical. Thus, simply adopting confidence building measures is *not* alone enough to make a positive difference. As well, the process cannot long survive indifference or the lack of meaningful leadership. Further, if basic changes in security thinking are not institutionalized to at least some extent, there is a risk that the process will deteriorate. In this sense, there may be a finite window of opportunity during which confidence building can help transform difficult security relations.

Great hopes increasingly are attached to the possibilities of confidence building, particularly in light of the success enjoyed in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe or CSCE (now termed the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe or OSCE) confidence building negotiations during the late 1980s and early 1990s. After all, confidence building — understood as the broad process of developing, negotiating, and implementing a confidence building agreement — appears to have played an important role in the remarkable transformation of European security relations during this period.

There are two claims residing in this interpretation that are important to the thinking underlying this review. They should be identified explicitly. The claims are that:

(1) there indeed has been a meaningful transformation in the security relations of most OSCE states, and
(2) "confidence building" — understood as a process — has played an important role in that transformation.

It is *not* claimed here that the development, negotiation, and implementation of confidence building agreements was the sole cause of this profound change in security relations, only that confidence building appears to have played an important role, at minimum helping to institutionalize some of the changes. The simple fact that comprehensive confidence building agreements and a significant force reduction treaty (the Conventional Forces in Europe or CFE Treaty) have been negotiated and enjoy substantial continuing support is ample evidence that changed security relations have been institutionalized.

The prospects for developing effective confidence building arrangements in new application areas, either informed by or patterned broadly on the European model and its generalized lessons, therefore seem promising and are a direct function of this earlier success. If the same or similar sorts of positive change can be fostered in other application areas, the confidence building approach will prove to be both powerful and general.

However, confidence building is an imperfectly understood security management approach, even in the CSCE/OSCE case. This makes its real promise more uncertain than is usually appreciated. To use the approach effectively in new contexts, therefore, we must understand how it works and what it entails. Importantly, this understanding must be rendered in terms as generalized as possible and must be based on an appropriately rigorous conceptual foundation. The professional literature exploring confidence building has not been as useful in this regard as one might hope, tending to be both operational in orientation and atheoretical.

Background

Confidence Building in the Arms Control Process: A Transformation View explores a variety of conceptual and practical issues associated with confidence building in an attempt to better understand both its nature and its potential. The aim is to move past current, overly-simplified appreciations of confidence building -- appreciations that are in fact quite dated -- and to explain this potentially powerful security management approach in terms that highlight its under-appreciated capacity to help transform difficult security relationships under specified circumstances.

The views presented in this review are by no means widely held. Most who are familiar with confidence building see it in much simpler terms rooted in early 1980s-era thinking. Thus, there is still a strong tendency in both policy and analytic circles to employ what can be termed a "minimalist construction" of confidence building. This understanding typically lacks a clear causal sense of how the confidence building process functions: That is, how and why developing, negotiating, and implementing a confidence building agreement can significantly improve a security relationship characterized by suspicion, misperceptions, and presumptions of hostility.

In the minimalist construction, "confidence building" is assigned little sense of real process and is treated for all intents and purposes as a synonym for the *use* of confidence building measures (CBMs) or, even less helpfully, as a synonym for the CBMs themselves. And using these measures is associated with a general but unexplored expectation that the adoption and use of CBMs more-or-less automatically will reduce suspicion and misperception, thus improving a security relationship. This is presumed to occur because participating states will have more (and

more reliable) information about each others' military intentions, capabilities, and activities.

However, this minimalist assumption is an inadequate basis for explanation and, hence, for action. *In an enduringly antagonistic military relationship, without the change of something more fundamental than enhanced transparency, more information is not necessarily going to result in reduced tensions and a better, more stable relationship*. It is entirely reasonable to believe, for instance, that more information will increase rather than diminish suspicion because it will feed powerful existing fears and populate misperceptions with additional grounds for concern. It is this assertion that "something more" than enhanced transparency must happen for security relations to improve in a meaningful way that is the key claim setting this study apart from most other discussions of confidence building.

The understanding of confidence building evolving in this study demands more: it insists on asking *why* security relations improve as a result of negotiating and implementing CBM agreements. This more comprehensive and rigorous view takes as a given that significant improvement in security relations is the central, conscious goal motivating participation in the confidence building policy process. It also assumes as a working hypothesis that positive change does indeed occur as a result of engaging successfully in that process. However, this view does *not* assume that positive change automatically will occur simply because there is increased information or because CBMs of various standard types are adopted. Instead, it treats the process of security relations improvement as a phenomenon that needs to be explained, both on its own terms and in relation to the operation of confidence building negotiations and their agreements.

The views developed in *Confidence Building in the Arms Control Process: A Transformation View* stand in marked contrast to the minimalist construction. These views constitute a very deliberate reconstruction that builds in significant ways on the operationally-informed and incomplete minimalist understanding. They are also very different compared with the understanding of confidence building developed twelve years ago in the author's initial look at the phenomenon, *Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective*.[1] That original study, while critical of certain failings in the professional literature of the day, generally echoed the basic assumptions of that body of thought. It also was sceptical of the value of the confidence building approach.

The understanding of confidence building presented in the current review is the product of twelve years' intermittent reflection; a period of conceptual evolution that has seen the development of several distinct variations on the understanding first hinted in the original study. In retrospect, some of those interim constructions were weak, particularly concerning the relationship between confidence building and transformation, but the process of unravelling the meaning of confidence building generally has moved forward, nevertheless. While this process of exploration is far from complete, the present articulation of confidence building ideas represents what appears to be a significant advance in the effort to understand in a general way what "confidence building" entails and how it works.

Why Understanding the Confidence Building Process Matters

The persistent failure of the literature to explain the inner workings of the confidence building process is more important — and far more visible — today than it was twelve years ago when *Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective* was written. In the original study, this problem had no real defining context because there was only a rudimentary prototype agreement in place — the 1975 Helsinki Final Act's CBM package. In those frigid days of the Cold War, little was expected of it; there were only hints of what would follow. Today, we know that comprehensive confidence building agreements can be

developed and that they can be implemented successfully. We also know that quite profound changes in the perception of the security environment appear to have occurred at approximately the same time. These connections cry out for careful study.

After all, if we don't know how we reached the current state of transformed relations in Europe, then we are unlikely to know how to maintain and improve them. This is a very important point. As if to underline this concern, we are already seeing disturbing indications of our inability to sustain and nurture transformation processes begun in Europe only a few years ago.

At least as significant, without a sound causal understanding of the transformation process apparently tied to the operation of successful confidence building, we will have no idea how to transfer the generalized experience of Europe to other parts of the world and to other types of security relationships. This is also a very important point, particularly as other regions approach the threshold of significant security breakthroughs of their own. The general "exportability" of Vienna Document[2] style CBMs and the broader CSCE/OSCE model ought not to be assumed *a priori* regardless of our enthusiasm for the approach. Unfortunately, it appears that simple exportability often is treated as a given despite rhetoric to the contrary. This may lead to significant disappointments — and possibly much worse. The misapplication of the confidence building approach in new contexts risks either retarding incipient improvements or inadvertently worsening a problematic security relationship.

Conclusion

The study of confidence building is far from complete. The author's first examination undertaken twelve years ago uncovered some weaknesses in then-contemporary thinking but failed to grasp the significance of other problems. It also proposed some tentative conceptual ideas and an analytic approach intended to help clarify our understanding of the phenomenon. Since then, much has happened and confidence building has emerged looking like a surprisingly powerful security management approach. However, much remains unclear about how the process of confidence building actually functions and what role it plays in changing the way people think about each other and the threats that they pose.

The principal findings of *Confidence Building in the Arms Control Process: A Transformation View* reinforce the need to understand how the exploration, negotiation, and implementation of confidence building arrangements can contribute to a process of change in the conceptualization of security relations and the institutionalization of those changes. The fact that our current confidence building thinking is the largely atheoretical product of a particular political, military, and cultural context — thus, possibly the product of a unique set of circumstances — reinforces the need to develop in a very deliberate manner as general and abstract an understanding of the phenomenon as we can manage. This review attempts to move that undertaking several steps forward.

ENDNOTES

1. James Macintosh, *Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective* Arms Control and Disarmament Studies, No. 1. Prepared for the Arms Control and Disarmament Division, Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, Canada, 1985. Although published in 1985, the study was prepared in 1984.

2. *Vienna Document 1994 of the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures*, Vienna: 1994.

CHAPTER TWO

RETROSPECTIVE AND ORIGINS: CONFIDENCE BUILDING THINKING BEFORE THE STOCKHOLM DOCUMENT

The origins of the transformation view of confidence building lie in *Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective*, an overview study undertaken twelve years ago by the author. The transformation view is a direct product of efforts during the last twelve years to refine the initial study's analytic perspective and, more important, to wrestle with the difficult question of how confidence building as a process actually functions to improve security relations. This chapter provides a retrospective assessment of the initial review underlining how little has changed in mainstream confidence building thinking in the intervening twelve years. It also identifies the origins of the transformation view.

The Original Study

Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective was conceived to provide a comprehensive overview and analysis of the then-contemporary professional literature dealing with confidence building. In 1984, when the original study was prepared, the confidence building concept was still quite novel. Few were familiar with it and its possibilities were uncertain if nevertheless vaguely promising. Many analysts, however, (including the author) were sceptical of the whole approach, tending to dismiss it as being a very weak sister to arms control.

The literature of the day, while undeniably rich in practical insights and sound in many respects, lacked conceptual sophistication. It seemed to concentrate too narrowly on policy issues and policy prescription, paying relatively little attention to explaining how "confidence building," understood as an activity or process, actually might work to improve difficult security relations.[1] Indeed, the literature consistently focused on confidence building *measures* rather than the *activity* of confidence building (i.e., the process of developing, negotiating, and using CBMs). Worse, it often treated "confidence building" (implicitly an activity with clear process character) as being synonymous with what confidence building *measures* do (i.e., notify manoeuvres, oblige the acceptance of observers, require the submission of information, etc.). This generally unappreciated tendency to treat confidence building and CBMs as interchangeable is quite striking once identified.

While this practice may seem like a harmless terminological habit, it is not. In fact, it may go some distance in explaining why the confidence building literature, both then and now, has failed to come to terms with what confidence building is and how it works. The concentration in the literature and in practical discussions has always been on measures, which do not require much in the way of conceptual explanation. Focusing on measures has encouraged analysts to overlook the need for process-oriented, activity-based accounts of confidence building.

Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective, while sensitive to the need to address process issues, nevertheless exhibited this same mistaken concentration on CBMs. Its centre-piece definition was of CBMs, not confidence building. It would be a number of years before the significance of this over-concentration on measures was fully realized by the author.

As a first step toward developing a better appreciation of confidence building, the original 1985 study sought to impose some order on the sizeable literature of the day by developing discrete ways of organizing ideas about confidence building. Four separate analytic perspectives capable of characterizing what seemed to be distinctive aspects of confidence building emerged in that study, reflecting to some degree the diverse approaches evident in the literature. These approaches entailed looking at:

(1) Historical and contemporary non-European agreements exhibiting confidence building characteristics;
(2) CSCE/OSCE confidence building negotiations;
(3) Functional categories of CBMs; and
(4) Definitions of confidence building measures.

The continued post-1985 use of these four distinctive perspectives by the author was intended to help produce a more comprehensive appreciation of the confidence building phenomenon, particularly when combined with an awareness of the literature's broad analytic weaknesses identified in the second half of the original study. Chapter Seven, for instance, argued that the professional literature of the day typically failed to address seriously the nature of Soviet military capabilities and intentions as well as failed to explain how the confidence building process might work.

Although it was only imperfectly grasped at the time, this effort to progressively refine the four distinctive perspectives and to examine process issues (as recommended in the study's assessment of analytic short-comings) constituted the first hesitant step toward exploring the important causal relationship between the use of CBMs and improvements in security relationships.

It was hoped that the combined use of these four distinct approaches in subsequent work, adjusted to accommodate insights flowing from the analysis of the literature's so-called generic analytic flaws, would produce a rich, consistent, and comprehensive appreciation of confidence building; a synergistic product that would exceed the sum of its analytic parts.

However, this did not happen. Over the course of time, some of these approaches have proven to be more successful than others but there has been relatively little synergy. In addition, the insights derived from examining the literature's generic analytic flaws failed to inform the further development of these four approaches to any great extent, either in the author's own work or that of other analysts. Complicating matters, the overestimated independence of the four perspectives meant that problems with one — the definition perspective, in particular — could influence the others in negative and unanticipated ways, locking them all into a conservative understanding of confidence building.

Perhaps the most immediately useful of the four perspectives has been the typology of categories, while the most challenging has been the pursuit of a general definition of confidence building. The pursuit of the latter has continued long after the completion of the initial study and has provoked a variety of insights into the nature of confidence building. Indeed, this pursuit combined with the further exploration of the causal and process issues associated with the second generic analytic flaw identified in the original study have together developed gradually into what might be considered a distinct fifth approach: the construction of a general explanation of the confidence building process. The transformation view of confidence building is a direct product of this fifth approach.

A brief assessment follows of each of the four initial perspectives and the two generic analytic flaws outlined in the 1985 study; this is done both in terms of what they attempted to accomplish twelve years ago as well as in terms of how sound they really were, viewed from the critical vantage point of 1996. The lessons to be learned from this

initial effort should prove valuable to those interested in understanding the confidence building phenomenon.

Historical and Contemporary Non-CSCE/OSCE Cases

The first approach employed in *Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective* identified historical and contemporary non-CSCE/OSCE international agreements that appeared to contain measures performing basic confidence building functions. Looking at these arrangements, it seemed at the time, might provide some additional insight into the basic nature of the confidence building phenomenon; insight not dependent upon the singular and potentially idiosyncratic CSCE/OSCE example.

The broad assumption underlying this effort was that "confidence building" might be a relatively widely occurring phenomenon (perhaps identified by other terms) but one not so readily recognized for what it was. Thus, each historical and contemporary example might provide a slightly different perspective on the phenomenon. Collectively, they might provide a richer, more comprehensive understanding of confidence building.

Although it was a good idea and probably deserves another try, the examination of possible historical and contemporary non-CSCE/OSCE cases of confidence building was not particularly rewarding. First of all, the depth of analysis was not as serious as it might have been, tending toward a superficial list of candidate agreements that "looked promising" as examples of confidence building.

Second, the attempt also was undermined by an unsophisticated sense of what should or could count as a potential example of confidence building. It is probably the case that a serious, historically-oriented review of international agreements can only occur *after* a clear and comprehensive understanding of confidence building has been developed. Although it might be useful, in principle, to reflect on historical cases in order to develop a general explanation of confidence building, some sense of confusion about criteria — i.e., which agreements should count as examples of confidence building — is inevitable and (at best) unconstructive. After all, we are trying to use historical examples to build a general definition of confidence building but first need a usefully general definition in order to decide which examples should count as illustrations of confidence building.

Because of its almost inevitable dependence on an inherently conservative initial working definition of confidence building, an examination of historical cases of the sort undertaken in the original study is prone to reduce rather than expand the boundaries of our confidence building ideas. Thus, the use of historical cases selected according to the criteria derived from an unreflective working definition is more likely to reinforce rather than counter any basic conservative bias in efforts to understand confidence building.

A third major weakness undermining the historical perspective was the failure to distinguish adequately between genuinely *cooperative* agreements consciously undertaken and those that were *imposed* in some manner — a crucial distinction in understanding confidence building. It is difficult to envisage an imposed confidence building agreement where a lesser or defeated power has no reasonable option but to comply. It may well be a contradiction in terms and is seen to be so from the perspective of the contemporary transformation view.

This original imprecision suggests the need to think carefully about the status of any international arrangements that involve the imposition of CBM-like measures. The current United Nations-mandated regime developed to contain Iraqi arms programmes employs transparency measures similar in content to standard CBMs. However, this does not make the regime an example of meaningful confidence building. Another example is perhaps the Bosnia CSBM Agreement flowing from the Dayton General Framework Agreement. Its measures may be identical in content to those of

the Vienna CSBM Document (from which in fact they were drawn) but this agreement appears to have little to do with meaningful confidence building. That there could be confusion about this only illustrates the absence of sound conceptual work on the confidence building phenomenon.

Overall, however, it was at least helpful to be reminded of the possibility that some historical agreements (and the processes of change associated with them) might demonstrate genuine confidence building characteristics. Important, as well, was the study's identification of a number of then-contemporary non-CSCE/OSCE international arrangements that typically still are considered to be good examples of confidence building.

Key members of this group were United States-Soviet Union strategic nuclear-related confidence building arrangements. One of the best illustrations is the classic US-USSR "Hot Line" Agreement of 1963. Also important are various "Incidents at Sea" agreements. Relevant, as well, are several strategic nuclear force-related arrangements that call upon the superpowers to avoid (or clarify) military activities that might be mistaken for acts of aggression. The 1971 "Accidents Measures" Agreement and the 1988 "Ballistic Missile Launch Notification Agreement" are good examples.[2]

It bears mentioning, however, that the status of these agreements as examples of "genuine" confidence building is uncertain despite a widespread tendency to automatically consider them to be confidence building agreements. It is clear that they contain examples of well-recognized confidence building *measures,* they appear to have been cooperative in character, and there seems to be little of the usual zero-sum motivation seen in other superpower nuclear arms control agreements. However, it is less clear whether these agreements demonstrated the transformation potential that has emerged in recent years as a hallmark of the confidence building process. It is probably more accurate to say that these strategic nuclear-related agreements featured clear-cut CBMs but *might* not be good examples of genuine confidence building because they are: (1) too isolated, constrained, and idiosyncratic in application; (2) premature in terms of potential supporting background conditions; and (3) part of a security relationship — Soviet-American strategic nuclear relations — that offered very few intrinsic opportunities by its very nature for "real" confidence building compared with conventional force relationships.

These examples illustrate very well the difficult issue of how we should evaluate confidence building efforts. The mere fact that one or more well-recognized CBMs are elements in a bilateral or multilateral agreement does not seem to be sufficient for the agreement to count as a genuine example of confidence building. However, the negotiation process that yields an agreement should possess certain cooperative characteristics and previously-strained relations should improve as a result of the agreement's operation, if the agreement is to be categorized as confidence building. "Spill-over" from the very specific issues covered in an agreement to related security issues is probably another indicator, though significant, across-the-board positive changes are probably not necessary. However, this set of indicators require further analysis and should be explored in new research.

Also instructive in this discussion of contemporary non-CSCE/OSCE examples of confidence building was the fact, discussed briefly in the first study, that a number of what appear to be modest CBMs have been employed in Central and South America over the years as well as in the Middle East.[3]

However, even more so than in the case of strategic nuclear confidence building, it is not entirely clear to what extent any of these actually represent sound examples of confidence building. As in the case of Soviet-American strategic and naval CBMs, it should not be assumed automatically that agreements committing states to use CBM-like measures in Latin America, the Asia-Pacific area, or the Middle East necessarily count as legitimate examples of confidence building as understood in this report. The point here is to distinguish between the simple use of CBM-like

measures and a distinctive confidence building activity. This point will become more clear as we explore the transformation view of confidence building later in this review.

For the present, it is sufficient to note the need to re-examine earlier assumptions about the status of a number of international arrangements as examples of confidence building. That these modest regimes were developed in different political cultures could be very illuminating from a conceptual perspective, although this aspect was not discussed to any extent in *Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective*. This is a seriously under-studied dimension of security management research, one that is virtually ignored in efforts to export essentially Western ideas into new political cultural contexts. It also warrants a major research effort.

Overall, this "historical" approach was probably the least useful of the four developed in the original study, although it may become more valuable in the near future as we look at applying confidence building ideas in significantly different political cultural contexts.

The CSCE/OSCE Experience and the MBFR

The second cut at understanding confidence building in the 1985 study was the most obvious — a look at European conventional arms control negotiations explicitly intended to produce confidence building agreements. This amounted to CSCE security negotiations as well as the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) negotiations, the latter because of NATO's interest in developing CBM-like "associated measures."[4] The CSCE/OSCE experience has provided the context for most confidence building discussions since the early 1970s and was an obvious source of insight.

The examination of specific CSCE/OSCE-related confidence building negotiations up to the point of the previous report's preparation (1984) was hardly a source of startling insights; raising more questions than it resolved. To that point, it should be recalled, there simply had not been much real confidence building progress in Europe — or elsewhere. The analysis basically was limited to the very modest Helsinki Final Act CBMs of 1975 and the stalled MBFR negotiations. Making matters more difficult, East-West relations were particularly poor during this period and the possibility of a positive "transformation" in basic political and security perceptions — the heart of the current appreciation of confidence building — could not reasonably have been anticipated. Thus, the real nature and full potential of confidence building during this initial period was difficult to appreciate on the basis of the existing experience.

In the years since, however, the story has changed dramatically. The CSCE/OSCE's security negotiations in Stockholm and then Vienna have achieved remarkable success. They provide a rich and compelling illustration of confidence building in action. Indeed, it is perhaps *too* compelling an illustration. Despite the fact that these post-1984 negotiations constitute a valuable source of both practical and conceptual insights, the unreflective reliance on the CSCE/OSCE case as the sole exemplar of "confidence building" could be very misleading. A superficial familiarity with the CSCE/OSCE negotiating history and an over-reliance on the comprehensive 1994 Vienna Document as a menu from which to select CBM "solutions" could result in an overly operational understanding of confidence building that lacks virtually any conceptual underpinnings. That, in fact, is too often what has happened.

It is only when the CSCE/OSCE experience is filtered carefully through a process of deliberate, conceptually-oriented analysis that we can benefit fully from this extremely important practical example. The excessive attention devoted to the discussion of specific CBM proposals in the European context is probably at least partly responsible for the under-developed nature of conceptual thinking in the professional literature, both then and now. These are points that were not — and could not have been — fully appreciated in 1984.

The CBM Typology

The third distinctive approach to understanding the confidence building phenomenon employed in the original 1985 study was the construction of a comprehensive typology of CBMs organized by major functional category. Here, the goal was straightforward: to develop an organizing device capable of categorizing the large number of distinct measures discussed in various books, articles, official papers, and conference papers dealing with confidence building.

The typology has proven to be an immensely useful device and remains so today, in modified form. The attraction of the typology approach is obvious. A comprehensive typology of CBM categories constitutes a very practical and operationally-oriented approach to understanding confidence building — or at least one important aspect of it. This is an approach that naturally appeals to policy makers exploring the confidence building concept for the first time or seeking measures relevant to specific negotiating problems. For policy makers, this can seem to be the stuff of confidence building.

In effect, this approach amounted to the development of a comprehensive *menu* of both existing and potential CBMs organized in terms of their basic purpose — the collection of information; the provision of advance notification of military activities; constraints on troublesome military activities and deployments; and so on. Using such a comprehensive catalogue of CBM types as a basic reference tool, policy makers and analysts can more easily identify unrestrained activities, capabilities, and developments of potential concern and then devise appropriate CBM solutions. It is far easier to deal with lacunae when we have easy access to a detailed breakdown of existing CBM types than it is to proceed from scratch.

The careful use of a comprehensive typology can also help us to understand when we are treading near the margins of what counts as confidence building, at least according to the typology's underlying understanding of confidence building. With examples so visible, the nature and boundaries of confidence building, at least in operational terms, are more easily discerned. Thus, assessments of what counts as a CBM can be facilitated by the existence of a comprehensive typology. This is particularly helpful when we deliberately seek to expand the boundaries of traditional confidence building to accommodate new understandings of the confidence building process. It should be noted, however, that most analysts and policy makers tend to look from the inside out, dismissing those possible measures that do not fit easily into the existing conventional mould. Thus, the setting of clear boundaries can be a *restricting* as well as a *liberating* exercise. The conservative-minded typically will tend toward the former perspective.

Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective undertook a comprehensive analysis of CBM proposals and a review of several existing typologies in the professional literature of the day. That analysis led to the conclusion that all existing CBMs could be reduced to two fundamental functional types — three, if purely declaratory proposals such as "non-use of force" declarations were also included as CBMs.[5] It was argued at the time that these two fundamental categories — *information* and *constraint* — represented the two most basic ways in which all confidence building measures could function. Thus, specific CBMs were seen to inform or constrain — or both inform and constrain in the case of some compound measures. Within each of the two fundamental super-categories, four basic categories were identified, each with a distinctive functional focus.[6] A deliberate effort was made at the time to ensure that the broadest possible coverage of legitimate CBMs was achieved in constructing this category structure.

Although the category approach appears to be the essence of simplicity, there are some problems. For instance, the typology's strength is also a source of weakness. By necessity, the typology focuses on practical examples of confidence building *measures* and does not include any direct sense

of the process behind the use of those measures. Thus, this approach directs our attention to what specific CBMs do rather than to how the underlying confidence building process works. The nature of the confidence building process — whether understood narrowly as the "result" or "product" of negotiating and implementing confidence building agreements or, more broadly, to include more fundamental, associated transformations in security perceptions — cannot be accommodated by the category approach. It is strictly measure-centric, by design and necessity.

This focus on measures is not a serious concern *if* the category approach is consciously associated with other analytic approaches to confidence building that focus on process. The danger lies in the separation of the category approach from process-oriented views. Analysts and (especially) policy makers who draw *only* on the menu-like virtues of the category approach — often in combination with the practical example of the Vienna CSBM Documents and their specific CBMs — for policy advice will tend to develop a limited understanding of confidence building; one that slights process and causal issues. This is almost certainly unhelpful for the successful development of confidence building solutions in new application contexts, where this tendency is most likely to prevail.

The general value of the category approach also was impaired inadvertently by permitting overly-simple, implicit understandings of confidence building to influence the category approach's initial development twelve years ago. *This tended to expose the category approach to the least sophisticated and most conservative dimensions of measure-centric thinking about what confidence building is and how it works.* More important, it also tended to ensure that the category approach would be isolated from the potential later influence of more sophisticated ideas about confidence building. This occurred because the category structure was basically set from the beginning, an artifact of a simple working definition of confidence building, framed in terms of what CBMs do. There is no obvious way to harmonize dated category thinking with new definitions and explanations of confidence building that focus on process and change, short of starting over from scratch.

As a result of its inadvertent connections with very simple, measure-centric understandings of confidence building, the category approach is almost certainly less universal than it seems[7] and potentially Eurocentric.[8] At least as damaging, the basic conceptual thinking underlying it is relatively primitive and static, a conservative artifact of "old" confidence building thinking.[9]

Despite these problems, the typology is by no means fatally flawed. It is still a very useful device, particularly in its revised form — provided that its inherent limitations are understood. In short, the major practical limitation of the typology approach is that it may have encouraged errors of omission and conservative thinking. As a result, some potential types of new CBMs, ones that emerge from conceptually sophisticated, process-oriented understandings of confidence building, may not be easily accommodated in the existing typology because they were not anticipated in the earlier literature. This is a development against which we will need to be on guard for fear of dismissing useful CBM ideas.

Defining Confidence Building

Definitions that highlight the key aspects of complicated phenomena and outline in general terms how they function are useful reference devices for those who are grappling with new ideas for the first time. They are also useful reference points for analysts who are attempting to better understand those complicated phenomena. Definitions in the latter case can help analysts isolate contentious aspects of competing understandings, allowing them to extract the essential and central from the background noise of descriptive accounts.

The original study's fourth and final perspective involved the detailed examination of two related aspects of the professional confidence building literature:

(1) Explicit *definitions* of confidence building (usually framed in terms of confidence building measures); and
(2) Focused *descriptions* of confidence building's key operational aspects and objectives, discussions that performed approximately the same basic function as an explicit definition of the phenomenon.

The immediate goal of the definition approach was to identify common elements in various treatments of confidence building in the professional literature and then construct what amounted to a composite general definition. It should be noted, however, that this perspective did *not* include as an objective the explicit reconceptualization of the confidence building idea, *per se*. At that time there was no clear sense that such a reconceptualization was necessary; that would come later. The goal was to clarify existing strands of thought.

Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective devoted considerable attention to a survey of definitions and discussions of confidence building. Many explicit definitions, descriptive accounts, and more tangential insights from the body of the existing professional literature were examined with some care and a number were included in the study's text. Thirty-six distinct attributes of confidence building were distilled from that collection of defining efforts.[10] Although some of the attributes directly contradicted others, there was a clear pattern of characteristics that seemed to run through most discussions of the phenomenon. Out of that list of thirty-six attributes, a point-form composite definition was assembled, a definition intended to represent the essential character of confidence building as understood by the professional community at that time.

Reflecting the tendency to frame definitions of confidence building in terms of what confidence building *measures* did, the composite definition stated that military confidence building measures are:

"(1) a variety of arms control measure entailing
(2) states actions
(3) that can be unilateral but which are more often either bilateral or multilateral
(4) that attempt to reduce or eliminate misperceptions about specific military threats or concerns (very often having to do with surprise attack)
(5) by communicating adequately verifiable evidence of acceptable reliability to the effect that those concerns are groundless
(6) often (but not always) by demonstrating that military and political intentions are not aggressive
(7) and/or by providing early warning indicators to create confidence that surprise would be difficult to achieve
(8) and/or by restricting the opportunities available for the use of military forces by adopting restrictions on the activities and deployments of those forces (or crucial components of them) within sensitive areas."[11]

It is striking, in retrospect, how various examples from the literature (and thus the composite definition) focused on confidence building *measures* and generally said next to nothing about the process dimension of confidence building. In addition, there was no significant reference to how using CBMs caused any type of change in security relations beyond the expectation that perceptions would be altered, a view generally couched in the minimalist language of more information and greater predictability improving security relations. Although original study was sensitive to the fact that there was such a thing as a confidence building process and that it had to do with perceptual change, the process sense barely intruded into the composite definition.[12]

This attempt to construct a satisfactory general definition of confidence building — what the author eventually termed the "procedural definition" — was successful in a superficial sense. It

accurately captured the predominant strains of thought in the professional literature circa 1984 (whether mistaken or not) and it usefully summarized them in the form of an accessible composite definition.

However, in retrospect, it is clear that the effort was defective in some key ways. First of all, it was more uncritical than it should have been, failing to identify and correct conceptual difficulties in the literature's claims and assumptions; difficulties actually discussed later in the same study. It merely elaborated the *status quo* understanding of confidence building.

Since the original research was undertaken twelve years ago, there have been a number of opportunities for the author to re-examine some basic assumptions about what is central to the confidence building phenomenon. This re-examination has highlighted the need to distinguish sharply between confidence building *measures* and the confidence building *process* that gives meaning to the use of such measures. It has become clear in the intervening years that any formal attempt to explain confidence building *cannot focus directly on CBMs for they are not what need to be explained.* In fact, they are not "explainable" in any straightforward sense other than as artifacts or agents. CBMs are either the product or the agent (or perhaps both) of some form of process. It is the process that warrants explanation. Developing and then using the CBMs *causes* something to happen. It is the "something" and how it comes about that we want to understand, whether it is a narrower process associated with implementing CBMs or a more complex, associated transformation process.

Several years after the original study was completed, this realization led to the explicit construction of separate definitions for confidence building measures/agreements (in essence, what the measures "do") and the process of confidence building (what using the measures accomplishes in a broader sense). That, in turn, helped to refocus the author's analysis of confidence building, concentrating increasingly on process rather than superficial procedure. The transformation view emerged gradually from the effort to refine the relationship between these two dimensions of confidence building.

Generic Analytic Flaws

Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective was not concerned solely with attempting to impose order on the professional literature of the day. Although a comprehensive distillation of basic ideas (in the form of the four perspectives outlined above) was a valuable way of portraying the conventional confidence building wisdom, some harsh conclusions regarding the central analytic shortcomings of that literature also seemed in order.

The original study identified two fundamental types of conceptual problem — "generic flaws" — as typical of the literature at that time. Summarizing the nature of those two generic analytic flaws, the study argued that the literature typically was characterized by:

(1) Inadequate assessments of Soviet conventional military forces and the nature of the threat that they actually pose; and
(2) Naive, simplistic or non-existent assumptions about the actual process of "Confidence-Building" and its psychological dynamics.[13]

In retrospect, the second flaw seems more important although that was not evident twelve years ago when the Soviet Union was seen to be a formidable foe in many estimates. At that time, the first problem was more striking. That there might be a close relationship between these two apparently very different types of analytic flaw did not emerge as a possibility for a number of years.

Inadequate Assessments

The original complaint about inadequate assessments of the seriousness of the Soviet military threat was valid. However, focusing on this aspect

of the literature completely obscured a more important but less obvious point about the nature of the confidence building process. This warrants a brief discussion because it helps to explain the origin and nature of some thinking underlying the transformation view.

It certainly is true that most confidence building studies during this period failed to be explicit and thorough in discussing the nature of the Soviet military threat and the risks associated with negotiating and adopting CBMs, given that apparent threat.[14] Most treatments appeared to down-play this concern, the significance of which is easily obscured by the passage of time and the dramatic positive changes in European security relations since then. Nevertheless, there clearly was a tendency to minimize or simply ignore the significance of the Soviet conventional military threat in confidence building treatments.

Without dismissing the relevance of this serious analytic shortcoming, it may be more instructive from our contemporary perspective to ask:

(1) Why did confidence building advocates (both policy makers and analysts) apparently believe that the Soviet Union did *not* represent the sort of threat that other, more sceptical analysts and policy makers perceived? and

(2) Why did these advocates believe, apparently with some conviction, that developing and implementing CBMs would improve (presumably significantly) the security relationship in Europe and do so at relatively little risk?

It has taken a number of years to recognize the true (versus apparent) significance of this first "generic flaw" in the literature and to understand that it is tied to the second, theoretically-oriented analytic flaw. It now appears that many confidence building analysts (mostly but not exclusively Western) *actually may themselves have been participants in a substantial precursor confidence building process as they developed, wrote about, discussed, and promoted the confidence building approach as part of a developing community of experts.*

It is a special and regrettable irony that these analysts have not asked if and how their thinking about the "Soviet threat" was transformed as they developed confidence building ideas.[15] Significantly, this suggests the possibility that participants may not be fully aware of the process of transformation as it changes their ideas about the nature of threat posed by historically dangerous neighbours. A more provocative possibility suggests that participants *cannot* be fully aware of these types of changes on a personal level due to the internal, inaccessible nature of the changes. This obviously will make discovering and documenting the operation of the transformation process particularly difficult. Perhaps if the conceptual dimension of confidence building — particularly the need to focus on causal questions about what made confidence building work — had been better grasped and more seriously developed at the time, this aspect of the phenomenon might have received more attention in the literature.

Causal Weakness

The second generic flaw — effectively, causal imprecision — remains problematic as far as most of the literature is concerned. In the words of the original study:

> *"[T]here is a widespread and pronounced failure to either provide or refer to a satisfactory or even plausible model of the Confidence-Building process.* Most of the Confidence-Building literature makes some sort of reference to the ways in which 'confidence' can be created or fostered...*but there is seldom any serious discussion of the dynamic psychological process or processes that would presumably 'make' Confidence-Building 'work'".*[16]

Further, the original study observed:

> "For all its interest in speculating about how best to formulate successful Confidence-Building Measures, the literature exhibits remarkably little analytic or theoretical interest in exploring how ordinary individuals and groups are affected positively by the particular goals of or mechanisms underlying Confidence-Building Measures. For instance, it simply isn't good enough to assume, as a sizeable proportion of the literature seems to, that knowing 'all about' an adversary's forces and policies will 'somehow' reduce or control 'unwarranted' suspicion about intentions. There is no reference to *how or why* this will transpire. There is merely the intuitive claim that knowing "more" about a potential adversary will correct misperception and alleviate groundless mistrust. However plausible this may seem at first glance, there is no explanation of what the Confidence-Building dynamics are and how they work."[17]

It is discouraging to see how apropos these last observations remain after twelve years. The assessment made in the original study remains sound to this day, especially as analysts and policy makers attempt to apply confidence building ideas in new contexts. The disinclination to develop strong conceptual treatments of confidence building is most telling in the failure to produce a compelling causal model for confidence building but it is apparent in other ways, as well. For instance, the literature has not made much of an effort to locate treatments of confidence building in the larger theoretical work of international relations and its debates. Similarly, little effort has been expended in exploring the psychological character of confidence building despite the prominence of the latter in casual explorations of the phenomenon. Most regrettable has been the failure to use the practical experience gained in the CSCE/OSCE context to reinvigorate the study of confidence building and how it functions.

Conclusion

This chapter has briefly recounted the essential elements in *Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective*, an overview study prepared by the author twelve years ago as a comprehensive introduction to confidence building. Although a number of promising lines of analysis were initiated in that review, the view of confidence building that finally emerged was fundamentally flawed in ways that paralleled the basic weaknesses of the then-contemporary thinking that it represented. As the next chapter outlines, these problems continue to undermine the development of a comprehensive understanding of confidence building, how it works, and how to use it successfully.

The development of the initial review, despite the limitations built into it inadvertently, was a worthwhile exercise in several ways. Some of the basic elements remain useful to this day, such as the typology of CBM categories. In addition, many of the problems identified as weaknesses in the pre-1984 literature continue to trouble most confidence building thinking so their identification is certainly valuable. Least obvious but most important, *Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective* established the conceptual basis on which the transformation view was eventually developed.

ENDNOTES

1. This operational focus is not surprising because many of the professional literature's authors, at various points in their careers, also were negotiators and policy analysts contributing to the confidence building negotiating process. It is ironic, however, that analysts so familiar with process would spend so little time thinking about it.

2. For the texts, see *Arms Control and Disarmament Agreements — Texts and Histories of the*

Negotiations 1990 Edition (Washington: United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1990).

3. See *Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective,* Chapter Two, especially pp. 22-23.

4. The exact status of "associated measures" went unremarked at the time of the original study and is still unclear. It is true that NATO officials generally thought of these measures as being "CBMs by another name" when they were first proposed. However, their real purpose was not necessarily consistent with confidence building as we understand it today, being too much intended to achieve *unilateral advantage* as part of the larger MBFR negotiating process. The intention to achieve unilateral advantage seems inconsistent with our developing sense of what confidence building is about although this would not have been at all obvious at the time. This status issue — are associated measures CBMs? — is quite difficult and requires further study. No final assessment is proposed here and the status of associated measures is considered ambiguous.

The MBFR negotiations also are important for an entirely separate reason. It has been suggested that the MBFR negotiations were important because they permitted NATO and WTO officials to interact on both official and (especially) unofficial or informal levels. This insight eventually helped inform the underlying logic of the transformation approach although the importance of interaction alone has recently come into question. This point is explored in Chapter Four.

5. After twelve years, it is still not entirely clear how declaratory undertakings ought to be treated. Should they be considered a distinct functional category of confidence building measure, co-equal with information and constraint? It is true that they could be seen to have a genuine, positive impact on the confidence building process in some cases. However, these sorts of measures can also be completely hollow, proposed cynically for purposes of very specific political gain or to materially disadvantage an adversary. The experience of the CSCE prior to the conclusion of the Stockholm Document in 1986 certainly encourages a sceptical view but we should probably retain a relatively open mind on this issue for the time being. It might be most constructive to exclude them from consideration as true CBMs. At the same time, it would be prudent to recognize that in some contexts (i.e., non-Western European political cultures), they *may* play a more direct and positive causal role in contributing to a transformation process. Equally, they may prove to be meaningless.

From the CSCE/OSCE perspective, timing would appear to be central to understanding the nature and status of declaratory measures. From this perspective, declaratory measures — particularly, sweeping ones — proposed in the early stages of a developing security relationship are not likely to be intended as genuine confidence building measures. They probably will precede the actual initiation of a transformation process and therefore cannot contribute to it. Indeed, they are more likely to undermine it if no threat perception change has begun to develop. *If* they are proposed later in the confidence building process, once a process of transformation is manifest, then they may be able to play a constructive role.

6. In outline, the typology of CBMs developed twelve years ago included the following categories:

(A) Information and Communication CBMs

(1) Information Measures (the exchange and publication of technical information about military forces and activities);

(2) Communication Measures (the provision for direct exchanges of information);

(3) Notification Measures (the timely announcement of military manoeuvres and movements beyond a certain size or character);

(4) Manoeuvre Observer Conduct Measures (rules for treating observers at manoeuvres as well as rules for the conduct of observers);

(B) Constraint and Surprise Attack Measures

(1) Inspection Measures (provision for the inspection of specified military activities and forces);

(2) Non-Interference Measures (provisions to facilitate verification);

(3) Behavioral or Tension-Reducing Measures (limits on provocative military activities); and

(4) Deployment Constraint Measures (limits on equipment and personnel deployment in sensitive areas).

See p. 65, *Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process.* Chapter Six of the original study includes a comprehensive list of proposals

grouped according to this typology. Note that these categories have undergone several revisions during the past twelve years, a point discussed later in this review.

7. It would be reasonable — but incorrect — to assume that the categorization of one hundred or so CBMs — effectively every CBM mentioned in the literature of the day — would mean that we were dealing with a complete universe of samples.

The assumption of universal coverage is faulty because the professional literature's collection of CBMs was developed primarily on an ad hoc, pragmatic basis in response to specific operational problems, informed only partially (at best) by simplistic and operationally-oriented informal accounts of the confidence building process. Worse, more general accounts (definitions or explanations) of confidence building appear to have been derived from the examples of proposed CBMs rather than the other way around. Completing the cycle, the inferred understanding of confidence building (based largely on pragmatic CBM examples rather than a conceptually-oriented process view) informed thinking about new CBM examples.

The key to appreciating the weakness of this inductively inferred approach to understanding confidence building is recognizing that at no stage does a comprehensive, conceptually-oriented general understanding of the confidence building phenomenon have a chance to influence thinking about the scope of CBMs.

It should also be noted that not every proposed CBM was, in fact, included in the initial list of potential measures or in similar efforts by other analysts. In the original study's initial examination of CBM proposals, some were dismissed as being outside the bounds of what the majority of analysts meant by confidence building. The uncertain status of declaratory measures is a good example of a basic type that generally was not included. Some proposals that included force reduction or demilitarization also were excluded. These were too much like arms control reduction measures. The status of some verification-oriented measures also was uncertain, given that verification is often understood to be a fundamentally unilateral activity. Some confidence building provisions can facilitate or legitimate verification activities but this is only part of the verification process. Thus, even the initial collection of CBM proposals conducted for the original study involved some difficult and, ultimately, prejudicial judgements about which proposals would count and which would not.

8. The pre-1984 literature's exploration of confidence building frequently was conducted in the context of CBMs for Europe to moderate the East-West conventional military relationship, particularly its Central European armoured imbalances. Its formal focus on this context and the tendency to develop specific CBM examples with this context generally in mind makes the literature prone to charges of Eurocentric bias.

The direct effects of this form of bias should not be exaggerated, however. Although many proposed CBMs were conceived specifically with the European military relationship in mind, a number of others clearly were not. In particular, those dealing with naval and strategic nuclear issues constitute a different source of insight. Further, many of those measures developed with European conventional military force relationships in mind appear to have genuinely broader applicability. The example of the Korean peninsula immediately springs to mind. At least some Middle East cases also seem to possess a number of potential similarities as does the South Asian case of India and Pakistan.

Nevertheless, we should be concerned that the typology's raw examples disproportionately favour large-scale, land-based conventional force problems typical of Europe in the 1970s and early 1980s, particularly when the typology's menu of CBMs is used to provide the bulk of ideas for dealing with materially different security management problems. This is an issue that has not yet received adequate consideration.

9. Although the linkages connecting the category approach and its reference body of basic working definitions were not dynamic (i.e., they were not capable of reflecting changes at one end of the connection when changes occurred at the other end), it should not be assumed that the typology itself is lacking completely in dynamism. The categories *have* undergone change during the past twelve years. The changes, however, have resulted primarily from efforts to develop new, operational solutions to specific security management problems (as in the case of qualitative constraints). Change has also occurred as a result of attempts to clarify the nature of the original categories, several of which were rather muddled in their first articulation. No alterations to the basic nature of the typology, however, have yet occurred due to changes in conceptual understandings of the confidence building phenomenon itself.

10. See *Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process,* pp. 58-61.

11. *Ibid.,* pp. 60-61. Although the definition was of confidence building *measures* rather than the confidence building process, it contained a tangential sense of process in point 4 which spoke of correcting misperceptions. Point 4 is very important because it served as the entry point for thinking about process, eventually spinning off a separate, process-oriented definitional effort and triggering a cascade of conceptual questions over the years.

12. Almost as a throw-away remark, the paragraph following the composite definition (echoing the definition's point (4) observed that CBMs were:

> "undertakings that try to correct the misperceptions and fears that breed mistrust in the realm of national security affairs. Although the specific measures [address] military capabilities, the underlying dynamic is psychological. *The intent is to rehabilitate the image of the adversary.*" (P. 61. Emphasis added.)

This observation was very much on the mark, presaging the thrust of the transformation view. Unfortunately, the author failed to grasp the import of this observation for a number of years. It was only in reviewing the content of the original review in late 1989 that its implications were appreciated.

The explicit emergence of a process-oriented understanding based on this notion can be traced to James Macintosh, "Confidence Building Processes — CSCE and MBFR: A Review and Assessment" in Hans Rattinger and David Dewitt, eds. *Canadian and German Perspectives on East-West Arms Control.* London: Routledge, 1992 (written in late 1989) and James Macintosh, "Confidence and Security Building Measures: A Sceptical Look," in *Disarmament — Confidence and Security-building Measures in Asia.* New York: United Nations, 1990 (completed in February 1990). This paper also appears as Peace Research Centre Working Paper #85, Australia National University, 1990. It is a revised version of a paper that was distributed at a United Nations meeting in January 1990 at its Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific in Kathmandu, Nepal. Significantly, the first draft of this paper did *not* contain a discrete process definition. Only during the preparation of the presentation text was this aspect of "defining confidence building" fully appreciated, a revision incorporated in the final text version.

"Confidence-Building Processes — CSCE and MBFR: A Review and Assessment" contained the first sustained effort in the author's work to assign to confidence building a role both larger and more significant than the minimalist one typically associated with confidence building in the existing literature. It was in composing and revising this chapter dealing with the significant changes in CSCE-related security relations that the need to explore the role of confidence building *as an agent or artifact of security environment transformation* began to emerge. Work on that chapter initiated a conceptual exploration that saw confidence building first associated with a vaguely defined "underlying process" that was thought to be some form of "deeper" and more fundamental confidence building process. It finally produced, more than four years later, a more restrained conception of confidence building as an activity-based process capable of facilitating and perhaps even initiating positive security environment transformations.

The identification of *perceptions of hostile intentions as the major focus or target of confidence building efforts* was a critical step in the development of this revised conception of confidence building. Exploring this idea further, "A Review and Assessment" suggested that:

> "The confidence-building process, which must begin with a modest level of assumed non-hostility on the part of the participating states, is aimed at strengthening the perception of and the belief in the non-hostility of all participating states." (P. 123. Original text was emphasized.)

More illuminating but more-or-less hidden from sight, the accompanying note stated:

> "According to this logic, *the confidence-building process is primarily concerned with facilitating the positive transformation of beliefs about the inherent hostility and willingness of potential adversaries to use force.* The process involves changes of degree at first, but ultimately seeks to work a *fundamental change in beliefs.*"(P. 150, note 14. Emphasis added.)

This was the immediate origin of the transformation view.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89. In fact, the analysis initially identified nine distinct generic flaws (pp. 86-87) which it then reduced to two super categories as well as a more pervasive problem termed "analytic oversimplification" (pp. 91-93). The problem of oversimplification is worth further exploration but is not directly germane to the arguments developed in this review.

14. See *ibid.*, pp. 94-110 in Chapter Seven. This discussion included a relatively detailed examination of *why* it was necessary to be sensitive to the full, complex nature of the Soviet military threat and why it was important to treat it seriously. It was argued in this chapter that there were several competing accounts of what type of threat the Soviet Union and the WTO actually posed, all roughly as well supported by the facts as we knew them at the time. Some of these alternative or competing "realities" were far more accommodating to the constructive adoption of CBM regimes than were others. Some, on the other hand, would make the pursuit of comprehensive confidence building a dangerous undertaking with little chance of positive results. Thus, paying explicit attention to the nature of the threat was important. And failing to address it explicitly was a serious problem and a puzzling oversight.

15. The majority of Western analysts working in the confidence building area during this initial period - say, between 1970 and 1986 — were *not* inclined by training or perspective to simply dismiss as exaggerated or imagined the threat posed by the Warsaw Treaty Organization *before* they turned their attention to the confidence building idea. (The bibliography in *Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process* lists these analysts, including Alford, Darilek, and Holst. The key writers are also identified in Chapter Five of the original study.) Many were distinctly concerned about the general state of security relations between the two blocs, about specific asymmetries and geographic flash-points, and about the potential threat represented by various technical developments in the Soviet military (and, to a lesser extent, offsetting or parallel developments in NATO). They were not ideologically predisposed to dismiss the possibility of conventional war nor to promote what might be characterized as "dovish" security policies. Of particular relevance, many were concerned about the potential for "things getting out of hand," the potential for inadvertent war arising from misperception and over-reaction in a crisis. Although this argument needs to be developed further, it appears to be the case that shifts in attitude about the nature of security relations occurred at approximately the same time that these analysts were developing confidence building solutions and engaging in discussions promoting confidence building. Of roughly equal relevance, this shift in attitude clearly predated the dramatic changes in Soviet policy that made "believers" of former sceptics.

For those analysts from Poland, Hungary, and the other Central and East European states that comprised the non-Soviet part of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, it is less clear what transformation process occurred, if any, as part of their promotion of confidence building although it *is* clear that many were also quite enthusiastic about confidence building (and understood it in terms generally consistent with Western views). Many of them may have reached the conclusion that inadvertent war in Europe was the greatest single risk (with neither side being particularly more villainous nor ready to attack than the other) and that *any* coherent approach capable of reducing that risk was to be pursued as aggressively as possible. Because of their unique and slightly ambivalent position as citizens of states that were both ally and potential victim of the Soviet Union as well as residents in the midst of the potential battle ground in any major war, these analysts may have developed a moderated perspective favouring perception-altering CBMs that complemented rather than duplicated Western perspectives during the 1970s and 1980s. The confidence building approach, from their perspective, may have been the most politically acceptable *and* potentially successful security approach available for them to promote. This is an issue, however, that requires further exploration.

It is not clear to what extent Soviet analysts participating in the development and discussion of confidence building ideas shared Western conceptions. Many were fully conversant with the ideas developed by Western (NATO), neutral and non-aligned, and Central and East European writers although they were often reluctant to embrace them even in private discussions. It is likely that some of these Soviet analysts held private views roughly analogous to those of their Central and East European colleagues, seeing confidence building as

a useful and politically defensible approach to minimizing the chances of inadvertent war and reducing tensions. The better informed of these analysts likely would have been aware of the limitations of Soviet conventional military capabilities (and the Soviet system more generally), realizing that the threat was less substantial than portrayed in many Western circles. As is the case with Central and East European analysts, this is a subject that warrants closer study although it may no longer be possible to gauge these issues accurately.

16. *Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process,* p. 90. Italicised in the original.

17. *Ibid.* Emphasized in the original. Again, it is striking (and embarrassing) to observe how clear the need to focus on the operation of confidence building, seen as some sort of process, was in the second half of the original study and how totally it failed to penetrate the development of a conceptual understanding of confidence building in the first half of that same study!

CHAPTER THREE

CONTEMPORARY CONFIDENCE BUILDING THINKING: CONTINUING CONCEPTUAL WEAKNESS

The professional confidence building literature and the policy thinking closely associated with it generally continue to treat confidence building in much the same manner that they did more than a decade ago. This chapter focuses briefly on the continuing conceptual weakness of traditional confidence building thinking. In particular, the chapter discusses the essential features and limitations of the "minimalist" or conventional view that is still typical of the professional literature and policy thinking. In the process, it reiterates some concerns first noted in *Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective* twelve years ago. The chapter also introduces the notion of *reconstruction*, an approach to reinterpreting a policy-oriented activity that has developed a broader meaning than originally appreciated. Reconstruction has particular relevance in the case of confidence building where post-1986 events have given us a fuller appreciation of what confidence building may entail and be able to achieve.

The main point made in this chapter is that traditional post-1984 accounts, with their measure-centric emphasis and primary concentration on enhancing transparency, continue to do a poor job of explaining why security relations can improve as a result of "using CBMs," often failing to even address the issue explicitly. This is puzzling given the important confidence building accomplishments in the CSCE/OSCE since 1986. Indeed, this failure to incorporate insights drawn from the ongoing CSCE/OSCE experience should be considered a major limitation in contemporary confidence building thinking.

Background

The confidence building literature, from its inception, has had a distinctly operational and pragmatic character. That certainly was the case up to 1984 when *Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective* was written, a point emphasized in the previous chapter. The main preoccupation of the literature to that date seems to have been with developing practical solutions for a variety of real-world security problems based on the use of confidence building *measures*. Typically, these problems were surprise attack-related and viewed in the context of the Central European, NATO-WTO, armour-oriented, conventional military relationship. Although some analysts also examined confidence building in the maritime or strategic nuclear context or in other application areas such as the Middle East or Latin America, these were distinctly secondary efforts and were often informed by the CSCE/OSCE model. Probably as a result of this operational focus, most analysts displayed little interest in developing explicitly conceptual explorations of the subject, generally seeming to regard them as unnecessary given what they saw as the relatively straightforward and modest nature of confidence building.

While there is little doubt that the pre-1984 literature disdained detailed conceptual treatments with explicit causal models, some might argue, that this is neither surprising nor a problem. Confidence building, according to this view, is every bit as straightforward and limited a phenomenon as those earlier treatments implied. Confidence building involves nothing more than efforts to formalize arrangements enhancing access to information,

promoting interaction, and (perhaps) constraining certain types of military activity, especially those that fall outside the scope of more traditional arms control agreements. By this view, confidence building does not have an elaborate process dimension and does not "cause" in any meaningful way a larger process of improvement or positive change in the security environment. Certainly, no detailed claim should be made that it can.

Instead, this argument would continue, confidence building simply provides enhanced opportunities for sharing information and interaction through the use of CBMs. It is merely a modest artifact of a broader change in security relations and contributes, at best, to the improvement of the political atmosphere during such a transition period. Any change in security relations is primarily the product of processes and events external to confidence building and is likely to be both modest and temporary, given the exigencies of power politics. The real focus of confidence building is and ought to be on the generalized improvement in security relations that flows from more information cooperatively exchanged and the opportunity to interact in constructive settings. The goal is to control misperception. Thus, no elaborate conceptual exploration of process is necessary. Participants get to know more about each other and their intentions and this reduces the effects of misperception in a straightforward and obvious way. This "minimalist" articulation can be inferred in much of the literature and in most policy approaches.

This, in the opinion of this author, is a poor defence of the early literature and its problems. It sidesteps the complaint about conceptual weakness (primarily the absence of an explicit causal account to explain how confidence building works) and takes shelter behind unjustified claims of simplicity. Even granting that confidence building is the straightforward and limited approach represented in the minimalist construction, we are still confronted by the literature's failure to explain how even "simple" confidence building works. This consistent failure undermines efforts to dismiss as inappropriate complaints about the lack of conceptual sophistication in the traditional literature.

In general, it is fair to say that when the early literature addressed questions of even a vaguely conceptual nature, the result was limited, speculative, and rarely rooted in the larger theoretical literature of international relations.[1] The modest results at Helsinki in 1975 with its extremely limited CBM agreement, the distinctly unpromising political environment of the time (1982-1984), and the ideologically-driven differences in confidence building policy approach between East and West clearly contributed to this limited perspective. Nevertheless, there also was an underlying disinterest in looking with any sophistication at how confidence building could actually improve security relations.[2]

The more contemporary (post-1984) literature continues to reflect this conceptual indifference, but with far less justification given the impressive successes of the CSCE/OSCE process at Stockholm and Vienna and the growing interest in using the approach in new application contexts. This unexplored contemporary record of accomplishment represents a major, additional problem for current confidence building thinking. Whereas the early literature had little to explain in terms of the successful operation of confidence building, this is no longer the case, given that comprehensive confidence building agreements have been negotiated and successfully implemented. Just as important, there has been a process of constructive change in the security relations of most CSCE/OSCE states, change that seems consistent with the cooperative principles associated with confidence building. This practical policy history and the important questions that flow from it have not been the subject of serious analysis in the confidence building literature. This is the contemporary manifestation of the fundamental conceptual weakness of traditional confidence building thinking.

To be sure, we are well-advised to avoid ascribing to confidence building the capacity to do more than it reasonably can accomplish. This is a

sensitivity that must accompany any conceptually-oriented exploration of confidence building. It *does* seem implausible, for instance, that the CSCE CSBM negotiations single-handedly caused the transformation in European security relations during the late 1980s and early 1990s. On the other hand, it is very difficult to accept that there was *no* positive change in CSCE/OSCE security relations. Such a conclusion seems inconsistent with the historical record. Granting that there was a positive change, it is difficult to argue that the confidence building process played *no* role in facilitating that change.

The minimum claim in this critical assessment of traditional thinking is simply that the negotiation and implementation of CBMs in this singularly successful example (the CSCE/OSCE) had a positive impact on security thinking in Europe, helping to alter at least some aspects of its basic character, and can do so in other contexts. The real question is: "How much of an impact and what type of impact?" Once we characterize the issue of causality in these terms, it is clear that the conventional literature has not been adequately attentive to conceptual issues of this type. And this failure weakens efforts to use the confidence building approach in new contexts because its causal nature and fundamental requirements are under-explored and ill-defined.[3]

The Continuing Problem With Causality

The most striking aspect of conceptual weakness in contemporary treatments is the continuing absence in the literature of any sort of convincing causal account of the confidence building process, whether broadly or narrowly defined. Regardless of how comprehensive a conception of confidence building we wish to employ, there is little in the way of analysis to help us understand how it works.

A "narrow" understanding of confidence building, for instance, simply focuses on the most basic function of CBMs and CBM agreements — the provision of enhanced information about military capabilities and activities. Even here, however, there is a need to explain *how* implementing information-oriented CBMs accomplishes something positive. The tendency is to "black-box" the process implicitly — for instance, the information produced by information measures "goes in" one side (as an "input") and somehow the result is confidence and improved security relations. This is hardly an adequate explanation of confidence building, even when the process is treated as a very simple one.

On the other hand, a "broad" understanding of confidence building, such as the transformation view, holds that confidence building is a more comprehensive process. When it is successful, it must by its nature entail a process of positive change in the security relations of states, probably as a result of changes in basic security thinking and perhaps also as a result of the institutionalization of restructured security relations.

It is not necessary, however, even from the broad view perspective to assume that confidence building is solely responsible for change. Indeed, this seems unlikely. Nevertheless, from either a narrow or broad perspective, accounts must grapple explicitly with the issue of how and why change in security relations occurs as a result of confidence building. They must also acknowledge that states usually will deliberately pursue confidence building solutions because they wish to develop more positive, cooperative security relations in at least a limited range of security policy interaction areas.

Relying on the current literature, we continue to have only a fuzzy idea of what actually happens when CBMs or a confidence building agreement are negotiated and then implemented successfully. Most discussions of confidence building continue to limit themselves to seemingly commonsense observations about the virtues of military "transparency" that flow from the adoption of confidence building measures. In short, more openness through the implementation of well-recognized CBMs is assumed to yield less suspicion and improved security relations. But this is generally

the limit of "explanation." There is no deeper exploration of why adopting CBMs will produce (or at least help to produce) a positive change — ranging from modest to profound — in the security relations of participating states. This is a serious analytic failing, one that is typical of the minimalist perspective. Little has changed in this respect since the original study was conducted twelve years ago.

Although inferrable accounts in the literature — and in policy circles — may vary as to the overall causal importance of CBMs and their development in the larger process of improving the security environment, it is virtually always the case that *a meaningful positive change in a security relationship is expected to occur, either in part or in whole, as a result of the adoption and implementation of CBMs*. Otherwise, why would anyone pursue confidence building?

It is extremely important to understand that making this assumption about a positive role — even implicitly — amounts to assuming that there *is* a causal relationship. This is true whether the relationship between using CBMs and positive changes in the security environment is assumed to be *strong* (confidence building is largely responsible for change) or *weak* (it is responsible to at least some extent for change).

The failure to develop a comprehensive understanding of the confidence building process and its causal character is both troubling and limiting. It seems as if "confidence building" as a security management approach has worked in the defining CSCE/OSCE case. There certainly has been a significant, positive change in the way most European and North American states[4] have come to regard each other — and each other's basic military intentions. This should have triggered thoughtful assessments of the role played by confidence building.

Despite the generally undisputed positive change in security relations in the CSCE/OSCE case, we don't really know how or why this transformation in perceptions of threat has occurred. Nor do we know what role confidence building negotiations and agreements may have played in animating or structuring it. This has obvious implications for the use of confidence building ideas in new application areas and also bears importantly on the capacity of policy makers to sustain the progress achieved in existing application contexts such as the CSCE/OSCE.

Even when the contemporary professional literature has turned to what could be loosely considered "conceptual" treatments, moving beyond prescription to speculate about the internal and relational nature of the phenomenon, it usually has been in the very limited context of introducing confidence building by defining it, sometimes in a rigorous, point-by-point form but more often in a descriptive fashion.[5] Even on these occasions, however, the interest in exploring what confidence building means in a general sense has been perfunctory; the defining effort has merely served as a brief starting point for an otherwise operationally-oriented treatment.

Typically, as well, these efforts at definition and discussion have tended to be imprecise, occasionally failing even to distinguish adequately between CBMs (confidence building *measures)* and the *activity or process* of confidence building (i.e., the process of negotiating and implementing CBMs).[6] More recently, the literature has attempted to identify "lessons" from the successful experience of the CSCE/OSCE, but this too has been a strangely muted exercise when viewed from a conceptual perspective.[7] These efforts have not acted as a springboard for the more rigorous analysis of the confidence building phenomenon, as one might have expected.

Despite this general and consistent failure of the literature to look deeply into the nature of the confidence building process, the rare conceptual explorations of the confidence building phenomenon that do venture into this territory, more often than not, are greeted with indifference and even puzzlement.[8] At best, such efforts are treated as though they are making confidence building much more complicated than it really is. At worst, they are regarded as distorted exaggerations of what

confidence building is and can do. Most analysts, after all, continue to be influenced by the traditional, minimalist understanding of confidence building, a perspective that does not encourage the sorts of questions that helped to develop the more elaborate reconstruction of the confidence building phenomenon featured in *Confidence Building in the Arms Control Process: The Transformation View.*

It is this continuing failure to devote conceptually-oriented attention to the confidence building phenomenon that makes the discussion of the transformation view so important. Although the transformation view is offered as a serious alternative to minimalist accounts of confidence building, it has a value that extends beyond the simple articulation of a competing account. It explicitly raises a number of important questions that *any* account of confidence building should be able to answer.

A Closer Look at the Minimalist Perspective and Its Problems

Most analysts and policy makers familiar with confidence building would likely be comfortable describing it as the use of formal, cooperative measures designed to improve information, increase understanding, and reduce uncertainty about the military forces and activities of fellow participating states.[9] Some would also include military intentions in this characterization.

This very broad definition captures the basic elements present in most discussions of confidence building, views consistent with the minimalist perspective. As was emphasized earlier, this perspective recognizes little in the way of clear causal connections between the use of confidence building agreements and any deeper, underlying associated process of transformation in security relations. Instead, "confidence building" is treated for all intents and purposes as an approximate synonym for *implementing* a collection of CBMs (or simply the CBMs themselves). And implementing these measures is associated with a general but unexplored expectation that the adoption of CBMs will reduce misperception as well as perhaps clarify intentions, and thus improve a security relationship. This is presumed to occur because participating states will have more (and more reliable) information about each others' military capabilities and activities.

At the risk of oversimplifying the basic claims of conventional (minimalist) confidence building thinking, it must be understood that more information about — and greater exposure to — the military forces of dangerous neighbours will not necessarily improve security relations as conventional thinking implies. Indeed, relations may worsen as added information feeds existing misperceptions and fears, particularly if normal weapons acquisition cycles yield forces of increased military capability and ambiguous character. Even a modest conception of the confidence building process should acknowledge this and grant that more must be going on than simply the acquisition of additional information. Some conventional minimalist treatments come closer to the truth when they focus on the willingness of participating states to *permit* the acquisition of information — implying some form of basic change in attitude — but this line of inquiry usually goes no further. This important point speaks to the absence of much clear thought in conventional thinking about the causal nature of confidence building. In short, how in fact *does* confidence building, even if it is thought to be nothing more than the use of information-oriented CBMs, improve security relations? Conventional confidence building thinking is largely silent on this question.

Decades of Cold War experience with the progressively more refined acquisition of information via National Technical Means (NTM) would suggest that access to more detailed information *by itself* can easily produce the opposite of confidence building. The enhanced access to information made possible by ever-more-sophisticated NTM, after all, did little to disabuse superpower decision makers and analysts of exaggerated assessments in the strategic nuclear and conventional realm during the Cold War.

The key to understanding confidence building and how it works is not the role played by increased information or enhanced transparency, *per se*. This is only part of the story. Instead, it seems that *successful* confidence building must somehow be associated with and facilitate a basic shift in security thinking in influential circles in key states that makes at least some genuinely cooperative arrangements first possible and then acceptable, even attractive, when earlier they simply would not have been feasible. Then, agreements to share increasingly detailed and sensitive military information can occur and *reinforce* changes in threat perception.

In addition to lacking a sound conceptual foundation capable of explaining how using CBMs can change security relations, the minimalist perspective almost certainly is too limited. It is the product of an earlier time when analysts and policy makers did not yet see the greater potential of confidence building nor anticipate the need to account for its successful operation. This was likely the case because the political environment was very negative in the early- to mid-1980s and the impressive achievements of Stockholm and Vienna lay in the future. This limitation can only be offset by looking at what successful confidence building has achieved since these earlier days.

The Notion of Reconstruction

The transformation view does not simply reject the basic minimalist appreciation of confidence building. It is not seen to be wrong so much as incomplete, a poor reflection of what we now know about confidence building. In this sense, the transformation view amounts to a *reconstructed* understanding of confidence building.

"Confidence building" as a reconstructed concept has acquired a more comprehensive content than the early authors of the idea and its policy proponents originally seem to have intended. Negotiators and scholars in 1955, 1968, or 1973 may not have appreciated the broader impact that implementing a collection of CBMs could have on a security relationship. We have increasingly come to understand the transforming impact of CBM agreements, especially their negotiating processes, and can now legitimately characterize the "confidence building process" in more comprehensive, process-oriented terms than were understood ten or twenty years ago. This view, however, may be criticized because of the way it changes the conceptual content of the confidence building idea.

It is an entirely legitimate question to ask, for instance, whether experienced analysts today are wrong for employing a "minimalist" reconstruction of confidence building that grows directly out of their own recollections of what may have been intended when confidence building negotiations were undertaken in an earlier time. It would certainly be both unfair and inaccurate to say that negotiators at that time were trying to accomplish significantly more than they understood themselves to be doing or to impute to them more elaborate motivations about (for instance) security regime construction and perceptual transformation when they had no such motivations.

However, this is *not* the intention of the current review's main argument. Instead, the idea is to grapple with what we see *from today's perspective* to have happened in the course of negotiating and implementing confidence building accords in the CSCE/OSCE context and then distil that understanding in a generalized fashion. The nature of this reconstruction of confidence building is different compared with the sparer understanding of the past. The minimalist account is historically accurate in a narrow sense but no longer accommodates what we now should understand confidence building to entail. It is important that we keep the time-bound historical, policy-rooted understanding separate from the current, conceptually-oriented reconstruction. Many analysts may still be prone to rely upon the minimalist account because they remember quite well what was originally intended, a recollection rooted in a different context and time. This duality of meaning also obliges a certain caution and understanding in criticizing analysts for employing the minimalist construction.

Thus, the conceptual treatment of confidence building in this review amounts to an analytic reconstruction of the historical-operational experience of confidence building. Although a conceptual reconstruction must be true to the policy examples from which its essence is induced, it should not be limited to simply reproducing the explicit, superficial content of confidence building agreements or the dated thinking that initially informed their pursuit. The reconstruction's "allegiance" must be to the actual nature of the phenomenon, as best as we can divine it, which can mean going beyond what analysts and policy makers may once have believed about the limits and nature of the phenomenon.

Conclusion

One of the major underlying themes in this review is the proposition that confidence building can now be recognized as something larger, more complex, and more powerful than policy makers and analysts appreciated at the time they began to negotiate confidence building agreements over twenty years ago in the CSCE/OSCE context.

The "something larger" is not at dramatic odds with the "minimalist" policy conception, which often spoke (albeit imprecisely) about *changing perceptions*. However, the transformation view does expand upon some previously unappreciated aspects of confidence building and recognizes it as an evolving, dynamic phenomenon of greater complexity and potential power than was once understood. In particular, the capacity to help restructure increasingly unsatisfactory security relations will likely emerge as an important and under-appreciated dimension of successful confidence building.

As we explore — and attempt to apply — this important security management approach, particularly in new application contexts, we will doubtless continue to revise our understanding. However, this important undertaking will be handicapped if we continue to be constrained by limited conceptions of what confidence building is and how it works.

ENDNOTES

1. For instance, although the fine essays by Rolf Berg and Adam-Daniel Rotfeld undertook some conceptual exploration, the overall result was not conceptually-oriented. See Allen Lynch (ed.) *Building Security in Europe Confidence-Building Measures and the CSCE* (New York: Institute for East-West Security Studies (East-West Monograph Series Number Two), 1986). The same could be said of other work during the period up to and including the conclusion of the Stockholm agreement. Insights during this time seemed to be driven by operational CBM accomplishments or prospects, a habit of thought that tended to constrain conceptual thinking.

2. From the vantage point of 1996, it would be fair to say that a review of the pre-1984 professional literature reveals hints of a somewhat fuller appreciation on the part of some analysts of what confidence building might entail as a process capable of altering fundamental views about unfriendly or traditionally hostile neighbours. These insights, nevertheless, are fragmentary and never contributed to a sustained and focused effort to explain how confidence building as a process might function.

3. A partial exception to this general trend is Richard E. Darilek, "Confidence Building and Arms Control in the East-West Context: Lessons from the Cold-War Experience in Europe," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, vol. IV, no. 2 (Winter 1993). Another exception of quite a different sort is Volker Rittberger, Manfred Efinger and Martin Mendler, Confidence- and security-building measures: an evolving East-West security regime?" in Hans Rattinger and David Dewitt, eds. *Canadian and German Perspectives on East-West Arms Control.* (London: Routledge, 1992). It is worth noting that the focus in this piece is on security regimes and not on confidence building, *per se*.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of analysts working with confidence building, although very capable in other regards, simply do not appear to regard confidence building to be a phenomenon worthy of particularly rigorous inquiry or exploration. They seem to resist seeing any significant connection between

narrowly conceived CBMs and larger processes of transformation.

Although Betts does not talk about confidence building in a sophisticated way (see pp. 61-62), his article at least poses some of the *types* of questions that should be explored as we discuss the role of various arms control approaches in the transformation of security relations. See Richard K. Betts, "Systems for Peace or Causes of War? Collective Security, Arms Control, and the New Europe," in *International Security* vol. 17, no. 1 (Summer 1992).

4. Actually, the United States may be the single exception to these observations and speculations. This is a possibility that needs to be explored in some depth. The United States, because it was the single remaining true "superpower" during this period (with global perspectives and responsibilities neither shared nor shareable with other CSCE/OSCE participants) and subject, as well, to unique domestic political influences, may never have been a full party to this process of transforming conceptions and perceptions. Official American commitment to the CSCE/OSCE process, in the author's view, has tended to be modest at best despite the personal commitment of important individual American officials over the years. Thus, it is possible that the United States has never really been a full participant in the CSCE/OSCE's transformation process despite the prominence of individual Americans in the supporting epistemic community. This can go some distance in explaining why the broader literature dealing with change in European-oriented security relations, with a dominant role played by American scholars, has not been comfortable with transformation ideas. At present, however, this observation is entirely speculative and will require careful study before any real claims can be made of this nature.

5. The latter could be construed as efforts to *explain* confidence building despite the fact that they tend to exhibit little attention to matters of causality or necessary and sufficient conditions. In the original study, these discursive efforts were treated simply as a form of definition during the process of searching for the key elements of a composite definition. In fact, they are a bit more than that as they exhibit some broader explanatory intent and content. Nevertheless, the minimalist tendency and its broad acceptance appear to have limited analytic interest in more comprehensive and conceptually sophisticated explanation.

6. This distinction is more than semantic hair-splitting. In the literature covered by the first study, most analysts talked about "the use of CBMs" which, in fact, means confidence building *understood as a process or activity*. The tendency to use the term "confidence building measures" when speaking so obviously of the activity of (at minimum) implementing CBMs helped to obscure the need to address the process character of confidence building with its implied causal issues and other conceptual considerations. This tendency continues to this day. For example, the otherwise very able discussion of confidence building in Andrew Richter's *Reconsidering Confidence and Security Building Measures: A Critical Analysis* (Toronto: Centre for International and Strategic Studies (York University), 1994) often makes this mistake, speaking of "the study of CBMs" and the "concept of CBMs" when the context suggests that he means the confidence building process. The same habits of usage are evident in Michael Krepon, Dominique M. McCoy, and Matthew C. J. Rudolph (eds.), *A Handbook of Confidence-Building Measures for Regional Security* (Washington: The Henry L. Stimson Center, September 1993). Much the same is true of *Regional Confidence Building in 1995: South Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America,* Jill R. Junnola and Michael Krepon (eds.), (Washington: The Henry L. Stimson Center, December 1995) where the focus is exclusively on CBMs with virtually no mention of confidence building understood as a process.

7. See, for instance, Cathleen S. Fisher, "The Preconditions of Confidence Building: Lessons from the European Experience," in *A Handbook of Confidence-Building Measures for Regional Security.*

8. Policy makers generally appear good-natured, if still resistant, in responding to complaints about "conceptual underdevelopment" and "causal weakness" in confidence building thinking. For them, these complaints are abstruse, at best, unless the pragmatic impact of these claimed defects and the operational virtues of an alternative account have been demonstrated clearly. This natural reluctance helps to explain the endurance of the minimalist perspective because the latter seems serviceable. It is only in limited circles that the notion

of transformation and its association with confidence building has achieved any impact.

9. Even this characterization may be too restrictive for some analysts and policy makers as they may be uncomfortable with the explicit requirement that confidence building involve deliberately and unambiguously *cooperative* attitudes — in effect, a non-zero-sum perspective — toward compliance. Some do not see full and generous cooperation — sometimes even beyond the letter of an agreement's provisions — as necessary in working with an agreement's measures and prefer a Cold War-era zero-sum approach. It is a central tenet of the transformation view that without full and open cooperation, there cannot be genuine confidence building. Living by a narrow and technical reading of all aspects of all provisions in a confidence building agreement does not constitute "full and open cooperation."

This observation is particularly relevant in situations where a relatively great deal of suspicion and anxiety colour a security relationship. This means that two conflicting concerns must guide initial policy choices. On the one hand, an effort must be made to foster a cooperative atmosphere, as this is the only true route out of the negative relationship. On the other hand, circumstances may not warrant taking many chances because the security environment is still quite hostile and other states may take advantage of an agreement's terms. This suggests that the commitment to specific military CBMs (but approached with a zero-sum attitude) may be less important than the process of discussing them in an increasingly cooperative and constructive manner. This, in fact, is a major conclusion of this review.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE TRANSFORMATION VIEW OF CONFIDENCE BUILDING

This chapter discusses in some detail the essential elements that comprise the transformation view of confidence building. Although this account of confidence building is a stable product and the reasoning underlying it is mature, the transformation view is still a "work in progress." A number of important issues remain to be clarified, all of which are inextricably linked with broader empirical and theoretical concerns.[1] Further work exploring these elements of the transformation view should result in an even better and more convincing general appreciation of what confidence building is, how it works, and what it can accomplish.

In addition, our fundamental understanding of confidence building will need to be reviewed constantly as we look at how this approach works in new application contexts. Looking at confidence building in the context of different political cultures and new security environments with unique security concerns should help us to understand better what the truly essential features of confidence building actually are. This will help to move our understanding of confidence building away from its inevitable current dependence upon the experience of the CSCE/OSCE.[2]

While the transformation view is offered as a serious alternative to more traditional, minimalist accounts of confidence building, it is also an evolving product designed deliberately to accommodate new ideas and experiences. This dynamism may prove to be very important. There is a real possibility that confidence building is a policy activity that can evolve, acquiring new characteristics as it is employed in various contexts. The existing history of the approach in the CSCE/OSCE context seems to support this assessment. A static view such as that provided by the minimalist construction may be singularly inappropriate for understanding and informing such a dynamic process. For those not quite willing to embrace the totality of the transformation view, it can also be viewed as "food for thought," a sometimes provocative collection of ideas that may encourage analysts and policy makers to reconsider what they think about the confidence building approach and its potential.

The Transformation View in Brief

Confidence building, according to the transformation view, is a distinctive security management approach entailing the comprehensive process of exploring, negotiating, and then implementing measures that promote interaction, information exchange, and constraint (the basic constellation of military CBMs). It may also include the development and use of non-traditional measures, although this is less clear at present. The process, however, involves more than simply the production of a confidence building agreement. It also entails the development and use of both formal and informal practices and principles associated with the cooperative development of CBMs.

Confidence building definitely should *not* be confused with what CBMs themselves do. The confidence building process extends beyond this operational output in its capacity to help structure the potential for change in a stressed and uncertain security environment. The transformation view argues that when conditions are supportive, the confidence building process can *facilitate, focus, and amplify the potential for a significant positive transformation in the security relations of participating states*. The confidence building process – that is, the development, negotiation, and implementation of an agreement, including the practices associated with these three phases – can structure a developing if imprecisely understood desire amongst interested states to revise strained security

relationships that no longer seem appropriate according to existing norms, principles, and practices. According to the transformation view, this is the key to understanding confidence building.

The transformation view maintains that confidence building is a security management approach that is deliberately pursued by policy makers with the minimum explicit intention of improving at least some aspects of a security relationship among suspicious states by means of security policy coordination. Negotiated CBMs define the operational aspect of this coordination. When successful, confidence building is associated with a transformation process in most participating states in which at least some basic ideas about security relationships undergo a fundamental change. These basic ideas are ones that inform us about who is an adversary and how we should interact with others — both friends and foes — on various security dimensions. Collectively, these ideas could be said to constitute a practical theory of international security relations. As a result of transformation, at least some meaningful portion of these ideas and the relationships they help to define shift from having a purely competitive and predominantly suspicious character to having at least a partly cooperative character. However, this is not simple association. The transformation view maintains that confidence building, because of its basic character, is able to *facilitate and structure the potential for change in security relationships when at least some states are dissatisfied with* status quo *security policies and approaches.*

The transformation view does not see enhanced transparency as the ultimate objective and main engine of confidence building. It should be understood, however, that transparency-style CBMs remain a mainstay of confidence building agreements. Central to appreciating the distinction between transparency and the process of confidence building is recognizing that the narrow, functional purpose of individual CBMs is not the same as the broader functional purpose of the confidence building process itself. This is nothing much more than recommending that we distinguish between means and ends and recognize that the process of developing the means is at least as important as — and distinguishable from — the specific content of the means (CBMs).

It remains to be seen whether participants actually need to recognize the broader transformation-enhancing capacity of the confidence building process in order for it to achieve this end. If they pursue confidence building according to generally accepted norms (emphasizing the cooperative development of security solutions) when security environment conditions are supportive, transformation will be encouraged and perhaps institutionalized. The transformation objective may not need to be recognized explicitly, although the desire to improve security relations in a cooperative manner must be present. This is why we can say that enhanced transparency is not the true objective of confidence building even though participants may believe otherwise initially. The pursuit of enhanced transparency is by no means inimical to true confidence building — indeed, it is a natural first step — but it is not an objective that can dramatically improve security relations by itself. Indeed, the transformation view casts serious doubt on the unexplained ability of enhanced transparency by itself to lead to improved security relations.

Critics might object that any increase in information about unfriendly neighbours will enhance, virtually by definition, a state's sense of security because it will produce a sounder image of those neighbours' capabilities and intentions. Thus, for them, transparency-oriented confidence building does make sense. While, in principle, there is a small element of truth in this claim, it exaggerates the value of information that first- or second-generation confidence building agreements can generate (i.e., the information will likely not be very detailed nor reveal very much of narrow military value). It also overlooks the extremely complicated ways in which information, once acquired, is processed within national security establishments. For instance, such information is often subject to self-confirming distortion. Only extremely reliable, unambiguous, and detailed information processed

in an objective, technically rational manner by thoughtful policy makers can offer any real prospect of substantially improving a state's *sense of security through enhanced knowledge* when leaders (and peoples) remain suspicious of each other. Few would argue that the state's national security mechanisms often achieve this level of performance, especially during times of grave suspicion. More often, domestic, bureaucratic, and organizational politics and a host of distorting individual and group cognitive mechanisms interfere with the process, sometimes in quite profound ways.

The point here is that *changes in the way decision makers perceive security relations,* usually supported by some (but not necessarily overwhelming) external evidence lie behind improved security relationships. This is a core claim in the transformation view. The change in basic perceptions allows policy makers to interpret existing evidence in new, more positive ways. Although the information generated by confidence building agreements can help to some extent to change perceptions, its capacity in this regard must be seen to be as limited as the information itself. Transparency is a neutral means that can reinforce existing suspicions or help to transform them, depending upon how people are disposed to interpret information. *The confidence building process speaks as much to the disposition and how to change it as it does to the information and the ways in which it is made available.*

Important in this general reasoning is the fundamental claim that meaningful confidence building, honestly undertaken, is an activity that is explicitly (if sometimes imprecisely) pursued with the intention of improving security relations in non-trivial ways. Participants in the process, however, need only believe that the exercise is intended to improve security relations in a generally cooperative manner and be dissatisfied with *status quo* approaches. Explicit commitment to "transformation" is not necessary and, indeed, may be unlikely given its rather dramatic-sounding character.

This raises the interesting case of states that engage in preliminary "confidence building" efforts for symbolic or domestic political reasons, with no real belief that security relations with unfriendly neighbours can or should change. Is it possible for genuine confidence building to emerge from these inauspicious beginnings? The answer may be "yes" but only if the supporting conditions discussed later in this chapter are on the verge of coalescing. The chances of constructive change are uncertain in this type of situation but the mere fact that efforts are undertaken to begin a cooperative dialogue may be sufficient to permit the emergence of an epistemic community and the creation of a locus for discussion. This, in turn, may ignite the spark that eventually leads to genuine transformation. The recognition of nascent security management fatigue may occur as part of this preliminary process, triggered by internal government and public discussions of the state of security relations. Nevertheless, this appears to be an uncertain route to confidence building.

The Transformation-Enhancing Character of Confidence Building

The serious pursuit of confidence building arrangements, according to the transformation view, is an activity that is particularly well-suited by its specific nature to fostering positive changes in security thinking when conditions are supportive. The transformation view argues that the confidence building activity, because of its fundamental nature, can *facilitate, focus, synchronize, amplify, and generally structure (more-or-less in that order) the potential for change in uncertain security relationships.* Confidence building provides a framework for the development and institutionalization of new security relationships structured at least in part by new, more cooperative principles and practices. This is so both because of the activity's basic character and because of the substantive nature of the confidence building measures that comprise an agreement. The character of the

activity and the nature of the activity's product (a CBM agreement) reinforce each other.

As seen in its practices and principles, the basic character of confidence building is cooperative and hence non-zero-sum in nature. Although the entire spectrum of security relations may not be subject to negotiation and change, participants are committed by definition to developing cooperative, coordinated policy approaches to at least some important dimensions of security behaviour if they are engaged in meaningful confidence building. *It is this effort that structures the change in security thinking and its underlying conceptions.*

The requirements for successful confidence building basically amount to the opportunity, when conditions are supportive, for interaction amongst officials and experts who share (1) a sense of dissatisfaction with the *status quo* in security relations, and (2) a growing commitment to develop common conceptions of security and how to achieve and maintain it on a more cooperative basis. Complimenting the nature of the activity, the substantive operational focus of CBMs themselves typically promotes constructive interaction, information and knowledge exchange, and (perhaps to a lesser extent) the development of cooperative constraint. In a very practical sense, the CBMs also define the rules for coordinating designated security policies. Thus, the nature of the activity (confidence building) and the nature of the activity's product (a CBM agreement) interact with and reinforce each other constructively.

The Three Phases of the Confidence Building Process

Confidence building, according to the transformation view, is actually comprised of three distinct component processes that blend into and interact with each other. Each one is important in its own way for the transformation of security relations. Recall that these component processes depend upon the prior existence of supporting conditions for their successful development and each depends upon the preceding one for impetus.

The first is the *development phase,* a period during which the confidence building approach (including general principles and operational CBM examples) is explored informally by members of an epistemic community and, sooner or later, some interested government officials. The members of the coalescing epistemic community are drawn from at least some of the states currently locked in a suspicious relationship and perhaps also include some outside experts who can provide an initial framework of ideas. Interested government officials (probably mid-level officials) interact with epistemic community participants from their own states at first, perhaps, but become unofficial participants in broader discussions. This is easily accomplished in many cases because foreign ministry officials often move freely between semi-autonomous or independent research communities and foreign ministries. In other cases, independent experts move fairly freely into government bureaucracies on a temporary basis or develop strong links with key bureaucratic figures. Specific political cultural considerations may make the participation of mid-level officials a less important factor in some states where stricter hierarchical authority relations may reduce both the interest and the leverage of mid-level officials. In these cases, more senior officials may have to become engaged in the exploration and support of confidence building ideas during the development phase.

It is during this critical period that shared conceptions of how to improve security relations through policy coordination in a suspicious security environment begin to take form and prototypical programmes of action are developed. It seems likely that experts specializing in security management and generally familiar with the basics of confidence building will be "ahead of the curve" in identifying a security environment that is approaching a transitional state. It is easy to see how overly-simple and unsophisticated ideas about confidence building can play an important role in handicapping the potential for successful

confidence building at this early stage because they can shift the participants' attention away from the development of diffuse but important common understandings, toward the development of traditional CBM packages.

Because of the modest and seemingly undemanding nature of basic confidence building agreements, this particular security management approach is a natural subject of discussions within groups of interested experts concerned about security relations. The exploration of cooperative solutions, however, must address *more* than packages of CBMs if the confidence building process is to move forward successfully. At least as important is the emergence of a shared recognition that security relations are in a state of transition (and, perhaps, even crisis), potentially ripe for change in at least some key dimensions. During this stage, existing ideas about the nature of worrisome neighbours and the threats that they pose come to be seen increasingly as no longer accurate; a conclusion that can be supported by increasingly ambiguous analyses of security relations. It seems that some of the initial participants must be partially aware of the potential for change, although this may not become clear to many for some time. It is the discussion of possibilities (including the current state of the security environment) that helps to identify this potential for change.

The second phase — *negotiation* — sees the confidence building process enter a more formal stage. The role and influence of experts may decline significantly at this point although some participating states may choose to retain specialists as part of their negotiating teams. Portions of the epistemic community may also continue to function on a parallel non-government track (a so-called "Track II" role), interacting in different ways with official negotiations. In this second phase, specific proposals for confidence building negotiations begin to be explored in official circles. Informal forums and non-governmental discussions are replaced by formal if low-key preparatory discussions aimed at establishing negotiating mandates. These, in turn, are replaced by formal negotiations.

At least as important as the negotiation of first one and then, perhaps, additional political or legal undertakings (confidence building agreements) is the development of common perspectives, approaches, and understandings during the negotiating process as well as the growth in commitment to the basic idea of improving security relations on a cooperative basis through the use of CBMs. Very generally, "perspectives" refers to the tendency to see security relations as being unsatisfactory and to feel a vague sense of security management fatigue; "approaches" refers to ideas about how to deal with the tendencies evidenced by perspectives (namely, to pursue coordinating approaches like confidence building); and "understandings" refers to common expectations about how to behave in negotiations flowing from agreement about a common approach (behavioral norms include a commitment to non-zero-sum bargaining, the pursuit of inclusive and equitable arrangements, and the use of flexible coalitions for the development of negotiating ideas). This process parallels, probably on a less comprehensive basis, the development of shared understandings within the supporting epistemic community in the first phase.

It is the process of personal interaction, information and knowledge exchange, and the development of cooperative constraint, all focused by the confidence building enterprise, that helps create a web of shared ideas about the security environment and a commitment to change through the development of cooperative approaches. This occurs both within delegations at the negotiation (both on a formal and informal level) and in the participating states more generally (primarily within foreign ministries, at first). If the sense of security management fatigue is truly "in the air" within participating states, these changes will resonate within the states more broadly. This may be facilitated by making an effort to include military and defence officials on negotiation delegations.

The negotiation process can extend over the start of the third or implementation phase, with an initial agreement entering into force while amplified or new second-generation agreements are explored. Success in the implementation phase reinforces commitment to pursue more comprehensive agreements.

During the *implementation phase,* a negotiated confidence building agreement enters into force and begins to produce tangible results. If the agreement is generally supported, with participating states abiding by both the letter and (especially) the spirit of the agreement, the positive results reinforce tentative commitments to change and can create enhanced enthusiasm for more meaningful change in relevant security relationships. The various measures in an agreement reinforce the value of cooperative solutions and strengthen specific processes that help to structure new security conceptions. These specific processes mandated by typical agreements include interaction, information and knowledge exchange, and cooperative constraint (the essential focuses of CBMs). This can feed back into new negotiations intended to expand existing accords. If the overall process is successful, it is able to facilitate and amplify the potential for significant change in security relations — but only when security environment conditions are supportive. *These changes in effect are institutionalized to the extent that they are accepted as better ways of structuring security relations.*

We have no experience with a confidence building process that extends beyond the implementation phase, so suggestions that the potential for change can be transformed into a durable security regime are still speculative. (This possibility is discussed later in this chapter.) The three phases outlined above are plausible interpretations but the ultimate fate of even the OSCE process is, at present, very much in question. Time will tell whether or not other confidence building processes follow this general course.

The Transformation Process

The "transformation process" associated with confidence building is, in effect, the product of the confidence building activity (i.e. the development, negotiation, and implementation of a confidence building agreement) when conditions for change in security relations are supportive. The transformation process is broadly psychological and sociological in that it entails a fundamental, positive shift in the way specialists and relevant government policy makers think about dangerous neighbours and the sorts of threats that they may pose as well as broader understandings of the nature of security relations and how they work. The shift need not embrace all security relations in all respects. In fact, such wholesale change seems unlikely. However, a shift must occur where key conceptions of threat and hostility as well as basic understandings of security relationships acquire a new, more positive focus that stresses coordination and cooperation in at least some discrete areas of security policy.

The participants' terms of reference change as a result of the combination of: (1) the gradual emergence of genuine dissatisfaction with the *status quo* in security relations, and (2) the adoption of the confidence building framework with its particular perspective on security relations and how to improve them. By adopting the ideas of confidence building, participants embrace more than they perhaps consciously bargain for although the results are not inconsistent with their needs. Thus, transformation probably is not a consciously motivated process in the sense that policy makers say "Let's change our fundamental view of the world in order to precipitate new security policies." Instead, the transformation process results from an honest effort to develop some modest security policy solutions in the face of increasing dissatisfaction with the *status quo* and its costs. Relationships previously dominated by distrust

become moderated and new, more cooperative practices and principles replace security conceptions that now seen to be inadequate. It is unrealistic to think that such a transformation process will be able to change adversaries into friends overnight. What can happen, however, is that relations can shift to a more neutral status characterized by mixed assumptions of cooperative and competitive interests and practices.

Merely attempting to develop and negotiate a confidence building agreement, however, does not ensure that transformation will occur. The security environment must have developed to a point where conditions are supportive of positive change. The virtue of confidence building lies in its ability to reinforce, magnify, and focus this potential for change.

It should never be assumed that states with hostile intentions will somehow be converted to more pacific views simply through the superficial pursuit of confidence building agreements or (worse) their look-alikes. The notion of a "look-alike" agreement recognizes that the mere appearance of measures having the same content as CBMs does *not* make it a legitimate example of a confidence building agreement. Confidence building *should be defined by function and not just by form.* "Confidence building" cannot prevent states from making war if that is their intent. Indeed, it is not appropriate to characterize the development of "CBM agreements" as confidence building in these circumstances. Confidence building can only help states move toward more neutral or positive attitudes when their leaders no longer are actively considering the use of force and are dissatisfied (if only vaguely) with the *status quo* in security relations.

Supporting Conditions

A more detailed discussion of supporting conditions is necessary to fully understand the transformation view of confidence building. In order for confidence building to seem attractive and for it to have a chance of functioning effectively, the security environment must be seen in a certain light by specialists and policy makers in a potential application area. In short, these key players must be unhappy with the way the security environment is functioning. They must be dissatisfied with the *status quo*, its costs, and its prospects. This does not necessarily mean that a sense of crisis must prevail, only that there be generalized dissatisfaction with a "business as usual" approach to security policy. In addition, confidence building ideas need to be accessible and people in positions of relative power must be attentive to these ideas. These key supporting conditions, outlined below, must be present within at least most states in a potential application area in order for the initiation of a successful confidence building process. These conditions include:

(1) The emergence of a sense of "security management fatigue" concerning the ongoing, long-term security relationship amongst unfriendly states (that is, the relatively wide-spread belief amongst officials and experts that there have been too many years of stand-off, for reasons that no longer seem compelling (likely because underlying conditions have changed), with no apparent prospect of resolution).

(2) A complimentary and more focused sense of unease with *status quo* security policies (the growing belief that existing security policies and approaches are not working very well, with the corollary possibility that a change in some of them might permit a constructive improvement in at least some key areas).

(3) A complimentary and more diffuse sense of concern about the primarily domestic costs (economic, political, social, and moral) of maintaining the *status quo* in security policy, given the broad sense of security management fatigue and the narrower sense

of dissatisfaction with security policies.[3]

(4) The existence of at least a prototypical epistemic community (i.e., a transnational group of security experts) cutting across government and academic lines, able and willing to explore and promote confidence building ideas within at least the majority of states in a potential application area. It seems key that this group have reasonable access to at least some influential, senior government policy makers.

(5) The emergence of a new generation of more flexible and sophisticated mid-level policy makers in key ministries and agencies willing to embrace new, more cooperative security ideas and with adequate influence to advance these ideas.

(6) The existence of at least semi-sanctioned forums for discussion to act as focuses for further explorations and constructive interaction; and

(7) Perhaps a "leap of faith" initiative by one or more key senior decision makers that is capable of crossing a key emotional and conceptual threshold (the "Gorbachev factor.")[4]

There is no presumption here that dramatic changes must occur in one key state, substantially moderating its threatening character, in order for the fundamental nature of the security environment to be altered. Obviously, this could contribute to the potential for systemic change but it is not essential. Thus, no analogue to the collapse of the Soviet Union lurks within this understanding of supporting conditions.[5] It is more likely that less dramatic changes will have occurred in most if not all states in a potential application area and that this gradual evolution will precipitate increasing dissatisfaction with "old thinking."

The central theme underlying these supporting conditions is the presence of a substantial although unfocused sense of dissatisfaction with *status quo* conceptions and policies in a security environment where threats have become increasingly ill-defined and where, perhaps, the historical roots of enmity have receded in time. There is also a more general sense of security management fatigue, accentuated by increasing uncertainty about the true intentions of traditional adversaries and a growing concern about the costs associated with maintaining the *status quo*.

One important manifestation of this increasing sense of fatigue and dissatisfaction may be the heightened concern that conflict may occur as a result of miscalculation (unintended war). However, there should be no unambiguous consensus within any key participating state that adversaries in the potential application area actually entertain hostile intentions. Although contingency plans may exist, the use of force in any circumstance other than self-defence must be seen to be politically unacceptable. While it may overstate the case somewhat, it seems plausible to argue that there may be a relatively strong sense amongst many that existing (typically *realpolitik*-based) security policies and understandings of security relationships are now a part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

Also very important for successful confidence building, there must be a core group of specialists working with the same basic ideas about confidence building and security management (even if the ideas are not uniformly supported in each country); a forum for them to interact; and some access to government officials capable of and willing to promote these ideas, if only in a provisional manner. Deliberate state policy and non-governmental initiatives can support the development of this initial phase of confidence building, particularly by encouraging the growth and influence of an epistemic community and by informally exploring confidence building ideas.

These shared ideas, however, need not be carbon copies of existing conventional (predominantly Eurocentric) security concepts and policy approaches. Although it is likely that there will be elements drawn from the existing professional literature, the more important point is that experts and policy makers build common conceptions *together* that have meaning for them and the security environment in which they live. Outsiders may facilitate this by providing some basis for initial discussion and an existing program of ideas, but this is only a starting point. This is one of the ways in which the Eurocentric origins of confidence building can be moderated and the concept of confidence building itself can evolve. The insights developed by regional experts and policy makers will surely lead to revised understandings of confidence building and how it works.

It should be noted, however, that it makes little sense — and can be counter-productive — for regional experts or policy makers to summarily dismiss "Western ideas" and begin from scratch to develop their own unique approaches. Analysts may conclude that this is necessary if the current interpretation of confidence building simply does not fit, but this should never be a starting assumption. The transformation view has been developed with this sensitivity in mind. One of the great virtues of the transformation view is that it *separates* process and transformation (positive change in security relations) from any particular form (conventional military CBMs). The central element in the transformation view is the importance of discussion, interaction, and the development of shared security conceptions when conditions are appropriate — not the adoption of standard CBM packages.

According to the transformation view, then, confidence building really cannot be understood without a sensitivity to the importance of its necessary supporting conditions. It seems increasingly clear that confidence building, in the absence of these or generally similar conditions, will be incapable of changing the security relations of deeply suspicious states. Indeed, it is improbable that such states will even seriously pursue such an option and, if they do (likely for symbolic reasons), it is unlikely that any constructive outcome will ensue. Thus, only when the potential for change in the security environment is emergent can confidence building offer any prospect of success. But when these supporting conditions have begun to materialize, confidence building appears to represent an excellent mechanism for focusing and structuring that potential and helping to develop a genuine positive change in security relations.

The implication in this discussion of necessary conditions is that timing matters. If confidence building is attempted before these supporting conditions can be satisfied, the transformation view maintains that there will be reduced chance of success (that is, a positive change in security relations). These conditions, for the most part, must develop as a result of security environment evolution and domestic developments. However, sponsoring the development of an epistemic community, encouraging meaningful and well-intentioned interaction in the realm of security affairs, and initiating important symbolic acts can perhaps encourage the evolution of these supporting conditions and help build confidence building around the margins. Thus, there are policy initiatives that can promote and encourage confidence building, but they may be limited.

It is important to remember, as well, that not every effort to develop confidence building arrangements will lead to a constructive outcome, particularly if some of the participants are not serious about developing meaningful agreements (or are not capable of changing their traditional, suspicious security perceptions). However, if the initial stage is set by at least one interested party and the possibility exists for interaction amongst negotiators and experts, this can lead to the gradual development of a real confidence building process. In the absence of such interest and an opportunity to interact constructively, there can be no real possibility of meaningful confidence building as understood in this review.

A Closer Look at the Notion of an Epistemic Community

An epistemic community, according to a widely used account, is:

> "a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue area. ... they have (1) a shared set of normative and principled beliefs, which provide a value-based rationale for the social action of community members: (2) shared causal beliefs, which are derived from their analysis of practices leading or contributing to a central set of problems in their domain and which then serve as the basis for elucidating the multiple linkages between possible policy actions and desired outcomes; (3) shared notions of validity — that is, intersubjective, internally defined criteria for weighting and validating knowledge in the domain of their expertise; and (4) a common policy enterprise — that is, a set of common practices associated with a set of problems to which their professional competence is directed, presumably out of the conviction that human welfare will be enhanced as a consequence".[6]

The notion of an epistemic community plays an important role in the transformation view of confidence building. In particular, it provides a compelling account of how policy-relevant ideas, developed and refined by national and transnational experts groups with special competence in a subject, can influence international security policy thinking and action in potentially profound ways. The transformation view to a substantial degree depends upon the existence of epistemic communities to explain how policy makers from a group of states can come to adopt confidence building solutions to some of their common security policy problems and how this can change their basic understanding of international security relationships. Although it is possible to imagine confidence building occurring in the absence of an epistemic community, the existence of at least a prototypical community makes the process much easier to understand and far more likely to be successful.

The epistemic communities approach helps to explain how new ideas (such as the transformation view) can become accepted by policy makers, *helping to restructure their collective understanding of a difficult policy problem, its broader policy context, and how it may be solved.* This is a non-systemic approach to understanding how states can redefine their interests and elect to pursue cooperative policies; an approach that does not rely upon realist assumptions. Thus, according to this perspective, international security policy decisions can be, at least in part, the result of changes in ideas rather than changes in the relative power of states.

Bearing in mind the transforming potential of the confidence building process itself, it is striking that the development of an epistemic community performs a somewhat similar function. The successful operation of an epistemic community helps to restructure ideas about policy problems and solutions, leading to what is in effect an adjusted view of reality. This is also what confidence building can achieve. One can be the echo of the other in this fundamental property.

A central feature of the epistemic communities approach is the notion that policy makers usually have some latitude in deciding what course of action is in their best interest but don't necessarily know how to evaluate a problem or their options in new, more effective ways. Existing policy approaches may not provide adequate results and policy makers, if they recognize this inadequacy, will need to turn somewhere for help. Networks of knowledge-based experts — epistemic communities — are an obvious source of insight if policy makers are aware of them as well as their ideas and consider them to be a credible source of assistance. Epistemic communities, therefore, can play an important role in:

> "articulating the cause-and-effect relationships of complex problems, helping states identify their interests, framing the issues for collective debate, proposing specific policies, and identifying salient points for negotiation."[7]

The epistemic communities approach is a "methodologically pluralistic,"[8] reflective way of understanding how policy makers, when they confront difficult policy problems with no obvious effective solution, can benefit from the knowledge of experts, adopting not only recommended solutions *but also whole new ways of thinking about the problems*. Epistemic communities, therefore, can play an important role as "a source of policy innovations and a channel by which these innovations diffuse internationally."[9] When these policy innovations, including their expectations and values, become shared by international actors, "they help coordinate or structure international relations."[10] The key point here is that the ideas and information are shared across states so that policy makers in a number of states will have a generally similar understanding of the policy problem and its recommended solution. This is what helps restructure relationships.

The epistemic communities approach is a particularly powerful and useful way of looking at how ideas can transform the way policy makers conceptualize the world and influence what courses of action they select as being in their best interest, both on the national and international level. The approach helps us to understand about collective interpretative processes and the role played in them by networks of professionals with recognized policy-relevant knowledge. This seems very much to the point when we look at "unusual" but innovative and apparently effective approaches to managing security relations such as transformative confidence building; approaches that offer some prospect of changing those relations in fundamental ways at a time of uncertainty. For them to be effective, however, knowledge about these approaches needs to be diffused to and then accepted by other states also confronting the need to coordinate their policies in order to solve a problem. One way of doing that is through the development and operation of an epistemic community, in this case one that focuses on confidence building.

Epistemic Communities and Confidence Building

It appears that a relatively weak epistemic community played this type of role in helping to shape the CSCE's post-Helsinki security dimension after 1975.[11] Its influence is perhaps most noticeable in the content of the 1986 Stockholm CSBM agreement which is based on clear-cut minimalist confidence building principles and concepts. The literature examined in *Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective* provides a comprehensive idea of this multi-national group's ideas and membership although no effort was made twelve years ago to identify key community participants by name.[12] Nevertheless, the transnational and highly interactive nature of the group of experts contributing to the literature was clear at the time with no single national community of experts playing the role of dominant contributor. There was a relatively clear sense of the "problem": crudely, that misinformation, misperception, and unbridled suspicion were making the European security environment more dangerous than necessary and could lead to accidental war with catastrophic consequences. There was a relatively clear sense of the "solution": enhanced transparency and interaction could reduce the chance of dangerous misperception (and, to a lesser degree, surprise attack). One need only look at the list of proffered CBMs in the literature (post-Helsinki and pre-Stockholm) and compare it with what was included in the Stockholm and then Vienna CSBM Documents to appreciate a strong association. This is the causal nexus that remains to be explored in the professional literature. Note, however, that this perspective was a minimalist one and that no explicit appreciation of the transforming potential

of the confidence building process was evident in the perspective.

The argument emerging in *Confidence Building in the Arms Control Process: The Transformation View* is that a more comprehensive perspective — perhaps one similar to the transformation view — can be developed and can form the conceptual basis of a new epistemic community. Experts groups organized around the ideas associated with this understanding of confidence building can, in turn, help redefine policy makers' views about how best to approach difficult security relations in various parts of the world, permitting the adoption of more cooperative, coordinated security arrangements in selected policy areas if the supporting conditions are felt to be present.

International Institutions and Confidence Building: An Introduction

The notion of an international institution — an enduring, *cooperative* pattern of behaviour governed by rules beyond narrow self-interest within a distinct area of international life — is extremely important to the transformation view of confidence building. According to the transformation view, an international institution (or regime[13]) *is the most consequential product of a successful confidence building process*. This is how the cooperative practices and underlying ideas associated with a successful confidence building process can help to *restructure a portion of international life and alter ideas about how to think and act with respect to that set of security relationships*. The creation of an institution is how the shifts in thinking that occur as a result of a transformation process come to have a lasting impact on the structure and process of international relations. The practices and ideas include both the specific formal arrangements for coordinating security activities in a CBM agreement as well as the formal and informal practices associated generally with confidence building activity.

However, the relevance of institutions as agents and artifacts of change is a matter of considerable debate among international relations scholars and this can have a major impact on the role we see confidence building being able to play as an agent of transformation. International institutions in general are seen by some analysts (institutionalists of various types) to be an important and transformable source of structural stability and change. In marked contrast, other analysts (typically realists) question the claim that institutions can play a critical, independent causal role in international life. Instead, institutions are seen by them to be no more than a reflection of changes in power relationships and, hence, a variation on an existing *(realpolitik)* structural theme.[14]

Realists, if they think about confidence building, will tend not to see much potential in the approach beyond its capacity to produce arrangements that institutionalize (regularize) self-interested and temporary adjustments in state behaviour that flow from changes in relative power relations. Not surprisingly, those who see greater potential in the capacity of international institutions to actually alter subsequent state or policy maker behaviour, moving it away to varying degrees from the realist dictates of materialism and narrow self-interest, may see considerable potential in confidence building as an approach that can facilitate and then regularize fundamental ongoing change in security relations. However, there is no literature that frames questions about confidence building in these terms, so we are left to infer what competing accounts of international institutions would make of confidence building.

We should be clear at the outset, however, that the relevance of this broader debate to our understanding of confidence building is *not* whether changed relations can result from confidence building efforts — that is, whether the results of confidence building can be institutionalized in the form of new behavioral norms and practices. Both groups of scholars would likely agree that they can. Instead, the key issue is what the nature of the resulting regime can be and whether the new regime can then change the structure of international security relations and the subsequent behaviour of states and actors within states. For some

(institutionalists), an international institution can be an *agent* of change while for others (realists), it can be no more than an *artifact* of change. Depending upon which view we find persuasive, this will make a substantial difference to our assessment of what confidence building can accomplish.

It may be helpful, therefore, to look briefly at these basic approaches to understanding international institutions in order to gain a better sense of this unappreciated dimension of the confidence building process. The main purpose will be to see how well these different perspectives can accommodate developing confidence building ideas.

Contrasting Accounts of International Institutions

An institution, according to a widely-used definition, is:

> "a set of rules that stipulate the ways in which states should cooperate and compete with each other. ... They prescribe acceptable forms of state behaviour, and proscribe unacceptable kinds of behaviour. These rules are negotiated by states, and according to many prominent theorists, they entail the mutual acceptance of higher norms, which are 'standards of behaviour defined in terms of rights and obligations'"[15]

It certainly is easy to imagine a confidence building agreement qualifying as an international institution. Indeed, it is difficult to see how such a claim could be seen to be controversial. The interesting and challenging aspects of the institutional status of confidence building have to do with: (1) which other (non-CBM) elements of confidence building (things like practices and principles) might also qualify as part of the institution and (2) how this type of institution can influence behaviour during and after its creation.

As noted earlier, there are substantially differing understandings of what role institutions can play in international politics. In general, the realist perspective is sceptical.

> "[Realists] believe that institutions cannot get states to stop behaving as short-term power maximizers. For realists, institutions reflect state calculations of self-interest based primarily on concerns about relative power; as a result, institutional outcomes invariably reflect the balance of power. Institutions, realists maintain, do not have significant independent effects on state behaviour. However, realists recognize that great powers sometimes find institutions — especially alliances — useful for maintaining or even increasing their share of world power."[16]

Thus, institutions, as seen from the realist perspective, can never directly cause a state to alter its international behaviour. That will only happen if states make self-interested calculations that suggest a change is warranted. Institutions simply reflect state decisions to cooperate but such instances are few and far between by most realist standards. The realist perspective, however, by at least one account (contingent realism) does allow for a somewhat more positive view of institutions, although even this more positive assessment emphatically rejects a significant post-creation causal role for institutions. For instance, according to contingent realism, "self-help" (a staple of the realist perspective) does not necessarily preclude international cooperation and, indeed, can explain why states actually may prefer to use institutions to advance their own interests.[17]

Despite this more optimistic view of cooperation (and institutions), even the contingent realist perspective does not credit institutions with the capacity to actually change state behaviour. Institutions are still seen to be a stage on which power games are played. We are left to assume that states must decide to change the "rules of the game" for reasons of calculated self-interest and then pursue

a negotiated outcome with other states incorporating these changes in a regime. It provides a corrective for standard structural realism, explaining why cooperative policy options (including reliance on international institutions based on arms control and confidence building agreements) can be a sensible choice for policy makers.

In marked contrast to the pessimism of realism, at least three varieties of institutionalist scholarship see in institutions at least some capacity to actually alter state behaviour.[18] The most interesting of these for our purposes are liberal institutionalism[19] and constructivism (or, more particularly, the structurationist approach).[20]

Liberal institutionalism shares a number of assumptions with realism (including a belief in an anarchic international system ruled by self-interest)[21] but it is more optimistic about the contribution that institutions can make, particularly when states have mixed incentives to cooperate (some positive and some negative).[22] It is a rule-governed approach to coordinating international policy and solving problems, bound by fundamentally rationalist assumptions.

> "When states can jointly benefit from cooperation, ... we expect governments to attempt to construct such institutions. Institutions can provide information, reduce transaction costs, make commitments more credible, establish focal points for coordination, and in general facilitate the operation of reciprocity."[23]

Nevertheless, liberal institutionalists see institutions "rooted in the realities of power and interest." They do not envisage institutions changing fundamental international norms and they do not see as feasible any transformation of the international system flowing from institutions.

However, at least some liberal institutionalists recognize that "institutions change as a result of human action, and the changes in expectations and process that result can exert profound effects on state behaviour."[24]

The most relevant aspects of liberal institutional theory for any discussion of the confidence building approach are those that deal with cheating, information, and the establishment of focal points for coordination. Institutions, in each case, can help states overcome concerns about these issues. Most germane to the minimalist approach to confidence building, institutions can be effective information providers. Also important, they can help mitigate concerns about cheating. The theory is poorly equipped, however, to handle the transformation-facilitating role of transformative confidence building. The gulf between the sorts of problems that liberal institutional theory addresses (typically not security issues) and those relevant to confidence building is also quite substantial despite some interest in expanding this focus to include security issues.

As a practical matter, the liberal institutional perspective does not add a great deal to the inferrable contingent realist appreciation of confidence building. The former envisions an institution performing more actively than does the realist view but still within the same boundaries of rational self-interested calculations that see some benefit in developing cooperative rules of behaviour. Only at the edges of "strong" liberal institutionalist accounts is there any sense of ideas shaping structures which in turn can shape ideas and, as a consequence, colour action.

The constructivist (or structurationist) approach is quite different in its underlying assumptions and fundamental world view. In the most basic of terms, this approach argues that:

> "the fundamental structures of international politics are social rather than strictly material (a claim that opposes materialism), and that these structures shape actors' identities and interests, rather than just their behaviour (a claim that opposes rationalism)."[25]

In a very useful comparison contrasting constructivism with realism, Koslowski and Kratochwil observe:

"Instead of conceiving the international system in terms of distributions of tangible resources and of "invisible" structures working behind the backs of the actors, constructivism views this system as an artifice of man-made institutions, such as, but not limited to states. In general, institutions are settled or routinized practices established and regulated by norms.

"As to the problem of change, it is useful to distinguish among different types of processes characterized by change. On the one hand, we can think of changes within the framework of well-established conventions. Thus, the availability of and differential access to new resources will create new distributional patterns without necessarily changing the parameters of the system. Reproduction of systemic structures is not affected. ... On the other hand, a more fundamental type of change occurs when the practices and constitutive conventions of a social system are altered.

"The second process of change is central to [constructivist] analysis because it shows how actors can fundamentally transform the international system. Since the international system is an ensemble of institutions and since institutions are practices constituted by norms, the analogy of a game that is determined by its rules proves helpful for understanding the system's persistence and changes. In other words, fundamental change in the international system occurs when some (or all) of its constitutive norms are altered."[26]

Thinking in constructivist (structurationist) terms has certain implications for our understanding of international institutions. It certainly strikes a responsive chord as far as the transformation view of confidence building is concerned. Contrary to some claims, however, it does not oblige us to reject *realpolitik* as a description, only realism as an explanation of international relations. Thus, there can be constructivist account of realist behaviour. Clearly, this approach to understanding accords great importance to ideas and the capacity of agents and structures to affect each other (indeed, to constitute each other).[27] Each can be seen to be a reflection of the other, so changes in either can affect the other. Because constructivism sees international relations as socially constructed, it can far more readily accommodate the notion of transformation and its articulation in a new institutional arrangement. Thus, institutions can change fundamentally and new institutions can be created to manifest changes in thinking about how the world works. Most significantly, the new institutions can then change behaviour by providing new goals and policy options. This perspective is obviously accommodating to the reasoning associated with transformative confidence building.

On balance, "strong" liberal institutionalist and constructivist accounts appear to be most friendly to robust accounts of the confidence building process (i.e., those that see in confidence building at least some capacity to independently change security relationships). Realism is not so friendly although contingent realism can provide an account of confidence building that sees a regime or institution as a rational product of self-interested states that have decided cooperative security arrangements are in their best interest. Thus, it matters which "theory" of international relations structures our thinking when we come to look at confidence building, what it can do, and how it might do it.

This review does not endorse a particular view although it should be clear that its underlying thinking lies somewhere between constructivism and "strong" liberal institutionalism. It does, however, stress that how we view institutions, cooperation and coordination, and change will influence how we are able to view confidence building. This is one reason why the development of epistemic communities capable of seeing past conventional realist accounts of international life is so important.

Confidence Building and Regimes

Returning to the outline of the transformation view of confidence building, we can now see that the notion of a regime or institution embodying the ideas associated with confidence building can make sense, regardless of one's view of institutions and the dynamic role that they can play in international relations.

For a realist, such a regime will simply reflect changes in power relations and rational decisions to adopt cooperative policies. The structure of relations ostensibly will remain the same but the rules guiding some of its interactions will be shifted (if only temporarily) to acquire a more cooperative character. This, of course, does not mean that the structure itself does not change ultimately to reflect this shift in underlying rules, only that the analytic view of the realists does not accommodate or even understand the change.

For "strong" liberal institutionalists and constructivists, such a regime may reflect and embody a fundamental change in thinking about state relations although it, too, may simply reflect the reproduction of existing interests and structures. More important, the new interests and practices entailed in the new institution can, in turn, further alter state behaviour by establishing new expectations, habits of thought, and behavioral practices.

Without at least a modest transformation of basic security conceptions and expectations flowing *from* its pursuit and application, it is difficult to see how confidence building can improve basic security relations beyond superficial levels related to enhanced transparency — and even that is questionable. Thus, the transformation of at least some basic, central security assumptions and practices appears essential in order for confidence building to be able to accomplish anything more substantial than enhanced transparency. This could be interpreted as indirect evidence that confidence building *does* involve the creation of new institutions embodying new or revised "rules of the road" in at least some areas of security relationships. Indeed, we could argue that if there has been a confidence building negotiation that has produced a CBM agreement, then there must have been a transformation of at least some dimension in the participants' security thinking.

If the changes in security thinking facilitated by the confidence building process are supported by experience (including perhaps further confidence building successes) and found to be worthwhile, then the changes become increasingly institutionalized in a progressively restructured international security relationship. This restructured relationship *redefines* expectations of normal behaviour, marking the end of security relations that are defined primarily by assumptions of basic hostility and suspicion (at least within this particular realm of security activity).

Although this aspect of the transformation view is under-developed at present, the positively restructured security relationship that results from confidence building appears to have the characteristics of a security regime or institution. According to this view, the CSCE/OSCE security regime, visible today in a preliminary form,[28] is a reflection of:

(1) the principles inherent in the content of CSCE/OSCE confidence building agreements and associated statements of principle such as "codes of conduct";
(2) the cooperative behaviourial patterns associated with the negotiation and implementation of the agreement(s) (in effect, formal and informal diplomatic and personal practices that have evolved in the process of developing and implementing the confidence building agreements); and
(3) more basic (cognitive) shifts in security thinking that have occurred as a result of undertaking the negotiation.

The institutional aspect of the transformation view is very important because it highlights what the broader product of the confidence building

process can be and explains, if only in a very provisional way, why the various elements of the confidence building process are so important. They play a key role in developing new identities and interests (which amount to norms) that in turn define new goals and policy options. The new formal and informal practices associated with the full confidence building negotiation process (the way participants interact with each other and approach the solution of problems) and the changes in conceptions structuring fundamental ideas about security relations comprise the basis for a security regime along with the cooperative policy requirements and practices specified in the agreement's CBMs. This collectively is the "stuff" that structures the revised regime.[29]

Summary of Institutional Implications

The strong institutionalist view of confidence building maintains that the mere fact of honest participation in an activity (confidence building) that revolves around the development and use of cooperative principles and practices helps to change the way participants think, *if* they are ready to change the way they think about security relations. These changes, which collectively amount to a new institution, are reflected in both the content of the agreement and the principles and practices associated with its development. The new institution entails a revised set of rules that outline the ways in which participating states should cooperate as well as compete with each other, with a stronger emphasis on cooperation. Thus, the *confidence building process is first an agent of change and the resulting regime is an artifact of change that can then continue to operate also as an agent of change.*

The contingent realist view of confidence building, on the other hand, maintains that confidence building negotiations can facilitate the collective recognition of changes in relative power relations amongst states. Participating states decide for reasons of their own self-interest (recall the supporting conditions such as security management fatigue) to adopt at least a few cooperative arrangements for managing their potentially changed relationship. Thus, a confidence building agreement simply institutionalizes a realignment where one major participant has effectively lost relative power, significantly altering the relative balance. Here, the regime is simply an artifact of change on the systemic level. It should come as no surprise that those who subscribe to this basic perspective will not be inclined to view confidence building as a powerful tool for developing distinctly cooperative, dynamic security relationships (of which they are, in any event, deeply suspicious).

Ultimately, it is a matter for history to decide which view is correct with respect to how the changes engendered by successful confidence building can affect ongoing security relations. It may well prove to be the case that both accounts have merit, each explaining a different sort of confidence building experience. If policy makers merely wish to stabilize a change in power relations through the development of a confidence building agreement, the resulting regime will be limited and will not likely offer much prospect of the further development of a substantially altered security relationship characterized by more cooperative principles. In this case, the realist account will fairly characterize what is going on. This does *not* mean that more comprehensive changes cannot occur, only that this is not the initial intended outcome.[30]

On the other hand, if policy makers are more deeply troubled by existing practices and want to develop more cooperative practices within specified policy areas, the strong institutionalist account may more accurately portray intent, process, and consequence. In either case, there should be little doubt that confidence building is at least an effective means of establishing new rules of conduct. Nevertheless, the transformation view, while it can function in a realist environment, is more at home embedded in a strong institutionalist account of change in international security relations.

Placing confidence building in the broader conceptual context of international institutions

helps to resolve an extremely important problem that troubles more conventional treatments of confidence building – namely, how confidence building actually can alter security relations. Recall that even the minimalist approach implicitly assumes that confidence building can improve security relations. There are two general strands of thought discernible in the minimalist literature when it comes to implied accounts of how confidence building works. One suggests that the willing exchange of more information about military forces and activities will have a constructive impact on security relations, reducing suspicions and improving confidence in the non-hostile intentions of a neighbouring state. This aspect of the minimalist construction was discussed in Chapter Three. The second, somewhat more sophisticated but rarely discussed explanation inferable in some treatments (including the author's own earlier work) suggests that the opportunity to interact with other negotiators and experts in a cooperative enterprise such as a confidence building negotiation and in the exchange programs that follow can also reduce suspicions and improve relations. The two, of course, are not mutually exclusive although most conventional treatments tend to rely more on the former.

The point has already been made that having more information about traditionally threatening states is not adequate by itself to explain why security relations will improve. Knowing more through information exchanges, personnel exchange programs, joint activities, and invited observations is just as likely to feed suspicions as it is to resolve them *if* the general environment is fundamentally suspicious.

It is equally clear that a confidence building negotiation, even one as apparently successful as that which occurred in the CSCE/OSCE context, is still a modest and very restricted undertaking. The participants in such a negotiation are limited in number and influence. They (and their activities) simply cannot be credited with somehow changing the way their governments see each other. This inescapable limitation has tended to make many analysts sceptical of the capacity of confidence building to actually make much difference. It has also frustrated efforts to explain how confidence building works from an interaction-oriented perspective. A handful of foreign ministry and defense ministry officials, many of them relatively low-ranking personnel, clearly cannot transform the views of their colleagues and superiors and precipitate a wholesale change in security thinking, no matter how enthusiastic or persuasive they become about the virtues of "confidence building."

It is only by placing our understanding of confidence building in a broader context, one that includes the notions of supporting conditions and the development of new international institutions, that we can begin to see how confidence building can "make a difference." If a particular security environment is approaching – or has entered – a state of crisis, evidencing characteristics such as those noted in the preceding discussion of supporting conditions, then the confidence building process can play a disproportionately large role *in helping to structure the emergent potential for change*. This capacity to structure the desire for change defines the true power of confidence building as a security management approach. The transformation view revolves around this interpretation, redirecting our focus from the use of CBMs. The focus shifts to the *capacity of the confidence building process to help restructure and institutionalize key cooperative principles and practices of security behaviour*. This view helps us to understand how confidence building *can* make a difference but it also highlights critical limitations. According to this view, confidence building *cannot* be used to force constructive changes in security relations. It can only facilitate such a change when conditions are supportive.

Confidence Building and Other Security Management Approaches

One important and interesting implication associated with the transformation view is the possibility that other types of security management approach and, perhaps, other similar transnational

policy initiatives in non-traditional security issue areas also can help to facilitate positive changes in security relationships. Indeed, it is even possible to consider analogue processes working in non-security issue areas, although this is a notion that has not yet been explored in very much detail. Because the transformation view separates a particular type of security management approach (the confidence building activity) and its resulting measures from the process of change that gives the approach broader impact and because it highlights the general characteristics of that approach, we can see how it might make sense to speak of other activities performing a similar function. Although a broader discussion of various activities that might be capable of helping resolve comprehensive or non-traditional security problems[31] is not possible here, it nevertheless is worth noting in passing that such activities could share many of the basic characteristics of confidence building.

However, there remains the question of whether these non-traditional examples should be called "confidence building" or treated as being functionally equivalent. There is certainly a tendency in some circles to view confidence building as an activity that is restricted only to traditional military relations and that entails only the use of conventional CBMs to address traditional problems. Others have been much freer in their use of the term "confidence building" and, in the broadest cases, some have used it to refer to virtually any activity that promotes "confidence" (understood in the ordinary language sense). While the latter tendency is almost certainly unhelpfully broad, a more rigorous effort to explore the expansion of the boundaries of conventional thinking is probably worthwhile.

While by no means the last word on this subject, it seems sensible at least to entertain the possibility that the "confidence building approach" (properly generalized) could be used to address a wide variety of issue areas, either within the confines of more traditional accounts of security or in the broader realm of non-traditional understandings of security. However, for a particular example to count as confidence building, as understood in this paper, we can speculate that:

(1) It would have to entail a series of related processes (i.e., the exploration, development, negotiation, and implementation of a multilateral arrangement) focusing on a specific policy problem or collection of related problems;
(2) The processes would have to exhibit cooperative practices and principles of behaviour;
(3) The measures at the heart of the resulting agreement would have to focus on the cooperative development of enhanced information, interaction, and/or constraint (although other types of measure might also be involved);
(4) Its use would have to be precipitated by a sense that existing policy approaches were no longer adequate for dealing with changed circumstances (whether perceived or "real"); and
(5) The resulting arrangements would have to institutionalize new, more cooperative practices and principles, replacing or supplementing predominantly competitive ones.

This formulation suggests that "confidence building" might actually be an example of "regime development" or "international institution development." This, in turn, suggests the possibility that there might be related security management activities — perhaps more accurately termed confidence *expanding* instead of confidence *building* — that share many of the basic characteristics of transformation confidence building. These, however, would focus on enhancing and institutionalizing security relations (including non-traditional security relations) that already have a moderately-to-well-developed cooperative character.

Finally, is it possible to imagine a force reduction negotiation that could share these important characteristics of confidence building? The understanding of confidence building outlined in this review suggests that *any* type of security management negotiation, *if* it is structured in the right way and driven by cooperative intentions, can (at least in principle) yield movement toward improved security relations by facilitating change through the development of new, more cooperative security relationships. The key is to develop cooperative arrangements and to defer attempts to achieve unilateral advantage. Traditional force reduction approaches are too often competitive efforts to "solve" security problems through unilateral gains at the expense of an adversary. It seems improbable that this approach will change security relationships in a way that will encourage the institutionalization of more cooperative relations. That there is no tradition of approaching force reduction negotiations in a way that parallels the underlying logic of transformation confidence building does not mean that there cannot be such a revised understanding. However, this is an area that is virtually unexplored in either policy or analytic terms.

Confidence Building and Verification

Verification, according to a recent United Nations study, is defined as:

> "a *process* which establishes whether the States parties are complying with their obligations under an agreement. ... The process includes: collection of information relevant to obligations under arms limitation and disarmament agreements; analysis of the information; and reaching a judgment as to whether the specific terms of an agreement are being met."[32]

Verification is sometimes discussed in terms that connect or equate it with confidence building. The result can be confusing. For instance, in discussions of verification, "confidence building" is sometimes said to play a verification role, typically because many confidence building *measures* produce information about military activities and forces. It is also sometimes said that the inclusion of adequate verification in a security management agreement can play a confidence building role, because it "enhances confidence" in the reliability and good intentions of participants. And, of course, confidence building agreements can have their own verification requirements, contained in what are often termed "verification measures."

This sort of usage not only reflects a degree of confusion about what the two activities are and how they interact with each other, but also suggests that there are some legitimate *grey areas* where the functional capacities of the two activities and their measures really do overlap.

One of the most common, confusing errors in discussions is the interchangeable use of both the terms "confidence building" and "verification" in a broad sense of a *process* and in a far more specific and operationally-oriented sense of *measures*. Confusion results because analysts and policy makers mistake the role of specific measures for the broader role of the associated process. However, confidence building measures (CBMs) and confidence building are not the same thing and neither are verification measures and the verification process. In each case, measures contribute to the process but they certainly do *not* constitute or define the latter, which is considerably more complex. And it is the *process* in each case that is more important, not simply the measures that contribute to it.

The verification process ultimately is about unilateral compliance decision making using information derived from a number of sources[33], while the confidence building process involves the joint restructuring of security relationships around more cooperative principles and practices. Also important is the fact that the verification process, unlike confidence building, has no legitimate independent operational existence, although we certainly can talk about general principles and operational examples in the abstract. Verification must be

associated with and service a specific agreement or obligation of some sort. We verify compliance with the provisions of an obligation; without the obligation, there can be no compliance to worry about or judge. Confusing matters further, it seems at least possible that a confidence building process can occur as a result of pursuing arrangements other than explicit confidence building agreements, including verification arrangements.

Specific confidence building and verification measures, viewed in isolation, are deprived of any larger functional context that can explain what they contribute or how they work. The identical inspection or observation measure can play a role in a confidence building process and in a verification process, but it is not the same role in each case. Thus, the measure's basic nature changes depending upon the context of its use. Concentrating solely on the content of a particular measure, is a mistake; the measure's intended purposes and the purposes it actually serves must also be considered. In principle, the same measure can serve two quite distinct purposes in the same agreement (confidence building *and* verification facilitation) or shift from supporting confidence building in one agreement to the verification process in another.

One of the important points to be made in any discussion of the relationship between confidence building and verification is the fact that confidence building and verification, while not interchangeable, can interact with each other constructively. For instance, a meaningful confidence building process is difficult to initiate unless there is some minimal shared commitment to accepting the use of verification facilitating measures (thereby facilitating a meaningful verification process). Similarly, transparency-oriented confidence building measures can play a useful information-providing role in compliance regimes intended to help in the verification process for security management agreements. In other words, it appears that the verification *measures* can play a role in the confidence building *process* and that confidence building measures can play a role in the verification process. The real nature and role of the measures is defined by the context in which they are used.

Finally, and perhaps most confusing, the *process of developing* a compliance regime for a security management agreement, using measures identical in form to information-oriented CBMs, might also be an example of confidence building *if* it shares the five functional characteristics noted in the preceding section. Thus, confidence building (at least in principle) can result from two distinct security management activities: 1) the development of specific confidence building agreements (such as the Vienna Document), and 2) the cooperative development of compliance regimes for use in force limitation (such as the CFE Treaty) or other types of more traditional arms control.

Cooperative Monitoring

A brief examination of "cooperative monitoring"[34] is in order at this point because discussions of cooperative monitoring can become tangled in broader arguments about the relationship between confidence building and verification. The use of terms such "cooperative monitoring arrangements" illustrates this complex relationship.

Cooperative monitoring is an approach to gathering information that is uniquely defined by its constituent techniques and the ways in which they are used. It is a distinctive *monitoring* approach that appears to have an excellent fit with confidence building, whether viewed in minimalist terms or transformation terms. It typically is seen to involve a distinct subset of verification activity that explicitly *excludes* any significant decision making about compliance, thus insulating cooperative monitoring from much of the inherently unilateral technical and political considerations of the broader verification process. Because its central focus is on the development of genuinely cooperative monitoring arrangements with the equitable sharing of access to information, it also excludes the unilateral collection of information for use in compliance assessments.

These considerations make it particularly effective for use in confidence building arrangements which themselves usually revolve around the cooperative development of information about military forces and activities. In fact, it is entirely feasible to imagine a confidence building agreement that contains *only* measures that rely on cooperative monitoring techniques. Although there is no intrinsic reason why cooperative monitoring cannot be used to support other types of security management arrangement, it would appear to be particularly effective as part of a confidence building agreement because it amplifies the cooperative nature of this type of agreement.

Confusion about the relationship between cooperative monitoring, verification, and confidence building is compounded by the possibility that so-called "cooperative monitoring arrangements," *if* they are stand-alone creations *not* intended to service broader security management agreements, may actually look like examples of modest confidence building arrangements *and* may involve a legitimate confidence building process in their development. To an important extent, this confusion results from the fact that cooperative monitoring describes a set of common techniques and generally makes sense when associated with measures that require the collection of information (CBMs). Unlike the case of verification which is a dependent process, it can make sense to speak about an independent "cooperative monitoring arrangement", although this usage typically confuses what is in fact a confidence building agreement relying upon cooperative monitoring techniques with the specific techniques themselves.

Thus, it is reasonable to argue that the development of a confidence building agreement that is supported by cooperative monitoring techniques is a particularly good example of confidence building and that the *process of developing these techniques* may be entirely consistent with our broader understanding of the confidence building process. While not every security management approach that might rely on cooperative monitoring techniques will necessarily be an example of confidence building, the fact that virtually all CBMs can benefit from the use of cooperative monitoring techniques and that many of the measures discussed in cooperative monitoring treatments are CBMs suggests a very close relationship between the two.

Organizing Categories of Confidence Building Measures

Before concluding this discussion of the transformation view of confidence building, it might be instructive to return for a brief look at the current version of the typology of CBM categories first introduced twelve years ago in *Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective*. In the intervening years, the original typology has undergone a number of revisions. Most of these were occasioned by the need to clarify the initial category definitions.

As indicated in Chapter Two of *Confidence Building in the Arms Control Process: The Transformation View,* the typology approach remains useful despite some methodological problems because it organizes a wide range of CBMs in a very accessible form according to their functional character. At present, the typology does not reflect any substantial changes flowing from the development of the transformation view of confidence building. However, it is possible to foresee how new confidence building efforts may encourage future revisions. Although many of the existing categories appear to be perfectly useable in new, non-traditional contexts, we may wish to add fundamentally new types of measures to this collection as our experience in this new dimension of activity grows. For the present, a "place holder" category — "non-traditional measures" — could be added to the existing structure to underline the need to think more creatively about this possibility. The current version of the typology is reproduced in abbreviated form below:

TYPE A: INFORMATION, INTERACTION, AND COMMUNICATION CBMs

(1) Information Measures (measures requiring or encouraging the provision (exchange) of information about military forces, facilities, structures, and activities)

Examples include: publication of defense information, weapon system and force structure information exchange, consultative commissions, publication of defense budget figures, publication of weapon system development information;

(2) **Experience Measures** (measures requiring or encouraging the opportunity to interact with officials or experts in other countries)

Examples include: military personnel exchanges, security expert exchanges, transnational secondments, joint training and joint exercises, seminars discussing doctrine, strategy, and technology issues;

(3) **Communication Measures** (measures requiring or encouraging the creation and/or use of shared means of communication)

Examples include: hot lines for exchange of crisis information, joint crisis control centres, "cool lines" for the regular distribution of required and requested information;

(4) **Notification Measures** (measures requiring or encouraging the advance notification of specified military activities)

Examples include: advance notification of exercises, force movements, mobilizations - including associated information about forces involved;

TYPE B: VERIFICATION AND OBSERVATION FACILITATION CBMs

(1) **Observation-of-Movement Conduct Measures** (measures requiring or encouraging the opportunity to observe specified military activities)

Examples include: mandatory and optional invitations to observe specified activities (with information about the activity) and rules of conduct for observers and hosts);

(2) **General Observation Measures** (measures requiring or encouraging the opportunity to engage in non-focused "looks" at relatively small and generally-specified sections of territory within which activities of interest and concern may be occurring or may have occurred)

Examples include: current Open Skies agreement;

(3) **Inspection Measures** (measures requiring or encouraging the opportunity to inspect constrained or limited military forces, facilities, structures, and activities)

Examples include: special observers for sensitive movements, on-site inspections of various forms, the use of special tagging devices;

(4) **Monitoring Measures** (measures requiring or encouraging the opportunity to monitor constrained or limited military forces, facilities, structures, and activities, principally through the use of monitoring devices)

Examples include: perimeter monitors; motion sensors for no-go areas; sensors for use in restricted access areas; activity sensors;

(5) **Facilitation of Verification Measures;** (measures requiring or encouraging participants to facilitate and not interfere with agreed verification efforts)

Examples include: agreement not to interfere with inspections or monitoring efforts

TYPE C: CONSTRAINT CBMs

(1) **Activity Constraint Measures** (measures requiring or encouraging participants to avoid or limit provocative military activities)

Examples include: no harassing activities such as "playing chicken" on the high seas or near territorial boundaries;

(2) **Deployment Constraint Measures** (measures requiring or encouraging participants to avoid or limit the provocative stationing or positioning of military forces)

Examples include: no threatening manoeuvres or equipment tests, no threatening deployments near sensitive areas (such as tanks on a border), equipment constraints such as no attack aircraft within range of a neighbour's rear area territory, manpower limits, nuclear free zones;

(3) **Technology Constraint Measures** (measures requiring or encouraging participants to avoid or limit the development and/or deployment of specified military technologies, including systems and subsystems, believed by participating states to have a destabilizing character or impact)

Examples include: no *replacement* of deployed military equipment of certain types (typically, tanks, heavily armoured combat vehicles, self-propelled artillery, combat aircraft, and combat helicopters) with new, more advanced types; no *modernization* of deployed military equipment of certain types in certain key, well-defined respects; no *training* with new systems; no *field testing* of new designs; and *no production* of specified new systems or subsystems.

Conclusion

To summarize briefly, confidence building, according to the transformation view is *not* simply the adoption of specific measures providing participating states with more reliable information about each others' military capabilities and activities. Nor is it simply the process of acquiring that information once an agreement is in place. Nor, finally, is it simply *any* activity that can produce some generalized feeling of well-being or reduced concern.

Contrary to more modest conceptions of the phenomenon, the transformation view argues that confidence building is a potentially powerful security management approach that, when conditions are supportive, can facilitate, focus, and amplify the potential for a positive transformation in the security relations of participating states, changing the basic character of at least some security

policies and interactions. When the process is successful, these changes can become institutionalized, altering the basic nature of security relations in important ways. "Minimalist" (traditional) accounts of confidence building fail to capture this key capacity to mediate and structure the potential for change when existing security relations are felt to be unsatisfactory.

ENDNOTES

1. Several items stand out. First is the need to analyze with even greater care the empirical CSCE confidence building negotiation experience and the broader changes in CSCE-related security relations during the last ten or so years in order to better understand how the use of the confidence building approach interacted with these changes. This rich empirical record needs to be re-examined from a perspective informed by the transformation view. Also important is the need to explore further the various ways in which fundamental ideas about security relationships can change as a result of (among other things) engaging in a confidence building process. In particular, the psychological character of the confidence building process identified twelve years ago in *Confidence (and Security) Building Measures in the Arms Control Process: A Canadian Perspective* (but not examined since) needs to be reintegrated into the transformation view more explicitly. The role of experts groups (epistemic communities) in helping to initiate the confidence building process also needs to be examined more thoroughly, especially as efforts are undertaken to develop the confidence building approach in new application contexts. Finally, the status of confidence building as a specific form of international regime development or institution building is also a subject that needs to be examined with some care. This is a particularly rich source of theoretical insight and may serve to finally integrate the study of confidence building into contemporary international relations scholarship. The provisional treatment of this subject later in this chapter merely hints at the potential residing in this material.

2. The author is extremely conscious that the transformation view may be open to the criticism of exaggerated inference from a singular and perhaps totally idiosyncratic example: the case of the CSCE. It certainly is true that relying on inferences about the nature of transformation, the role of an epistemic community, security management fatigue, and the other supporting conditions discussed in this chapter appears to collide with a basic complaint about confidence building thinking: that we base too much of our thinking about confidence building on the experience of the European CSCE case.

Leaving aside methodological issues associated with inductive inference, the response to this criticism is to argue that the basic concern ought to be with the *unreflective* use of the CSCE case, particularly cribbing its CBMs. This study involves, it is to be hoped, a more self-conscious exploration of the CSCE's lessons, conducted with a very specific intent to identify generalizable insights. This potential over-dependence also must be offset against the fact that the CSCE case presently is the *only* good example that we have of a genuine confidence building process. Thus, we cannot understand confidence building unless we focus on the CSCE/OSCE experience.

3. A fourth condition — "the emergence of increasingly ambiguous, expert estimates of the military capabilities and intentions of unfriendly states in the potential application area" — present in earlier discussions of supporting conditions has been dropped. This is more appropriately viewed as an indicator of the first three conditions and would very likely function well in that role.

4. This list of supporting conditions has undergone a good deal of revision. The treatment was initially restricted to a single list of conditions (most notably in "A Confidence-Building Framework for the Korean Peninsula," in *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* (Vol. VII, No. 1 Summer 1995)). Then, the list was split into two, in order to distinguish between "initiating" conditions and "transformative" conditions. It seems, however, that this is a false distinction that unnecessarily complicates a rather speculative argument. As with many other elements in the transformation view, we will need to wait and see if these ideas are borne out in new application examples.

5. The analysis that informs this understanding of supporting conditions does not view the collapse of the Soviet Union as the primary cause of the important

changes in CSCE-related security thinking that occurred in the 1986-1992 period. To a large extent, these changes predated the collapse and are more closely associated with the Soviet initiatives of 7 December 1988 (significant unilateral force cuts in East Germany announced by Gorbachev at the United Nations) and 6 March 1989 (Shevardnadze's presentation of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) position proposing very substantial conventional force cuts at the opening of the CFE talks), as well as the unification of Germany (unofficially, 9 November 1989) and the collapse of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (25 February 1991).

Clearly, Gorbachev and some of his key aides made a difference — and a significant one, at that — by proposing force reductions to equal levels set less than existing NATO force levels. This amounts to the "leap of faith" type of initiative noted in the portrayal of supporting conditions.

However, simply assuming that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the main reason for security ideas changing in many CSCE states confuses an *incentive for change* (a triggering event) that can have a variable impact on relations for the *process that both facilitates and structures change*. Just as important, from a practical point of view, the promise of force reductions, the collapse of the WTO, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union were as likely to destabilize relations in Europe as they were to lead to a wholesale positive change. Fear, suspicion, and new barriers to improved security relations might just as easily have ensued.

Thus, these events are not sufficient by themselves to account for the readiness of most leaders and their peoples to rapidly shift their thinking about security. They were *ready* to adopt new conceptions of security. Confidence building helped to prepare them and then helped to structure the changes. Thus, it played a *critical mediating role*.

6. Peter M. Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination," *International Organization* Vol. 46, No. 1 (Winter 1992), p. 3. Haas also notes that the following, additional characteristics are typical of an epistemic community:

> "[The members] share intersubjective understandings; have a shared way of knowing; have shared patterns of reasoning; have a policy project drawing on shared values, shared causal beliefs, and the use of shared discursive practices; and have a shared commitment to the application and production of knowledge." (*Ibid.*, Note 5, p. 3.)

Note the very strong emphasis on *shared*.

No attempt is made here to review the epistemic community literature in any depth nor to discuss the approach in any detail. The material presented in the text provides only a rough and ready appreciation of some highlights of the epistemic community approach.

For those interested in examining the epistemic literature in some detail, the following constitutes a useful starting point: Peter M. Haas, editor, "Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination," (special issue), *International Organization* Vol. 46, No. 1 (Winter 1992) (See, especially, Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination," Emanuel Adler, "The Emergence of Cooperation: National Epistemic Communities and the International Evolution of the Idea of Nuclear Arms Control," and Adler and Haas, "Conclusion: Epistemic Communities, World Order, and the Creation of a Reflective Research Program"). For parallel, similar, yet distinctive viewpoints, see; Martha Finnemore, "International Organizations as Teachers of Norms," *International Organization* Vol. 47, No. 4 (Autumn 1993); (especially) Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Ideas Do Not Float Freely: Transnational Coalitions, Domestic Structures, and the End of the Cold War," *International Organization* Vol. 48, No. 2 (Spring 1994); and Matthew Evangelista, "The Paradox of State Strength: Transnational Relations, Domestic Structures, and Security Policy in Russia and the Soviet Union," *International Organization* Vol. 49, No. 1 (Winter 1995). An important early articulation of the epistemic community idea can be found in John Gerard Ruggie, "International Responses to Technology," *International Organization* Vol. 29, (Summer 1975).

Note that the epistemic community literature overlaps and shares much common intellectual ground with the broader "regime" and "international institutionalization" literature introduced in the next section.

7. Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination," pp. 2-3.

8. Adler and Haas, "Conclusion: Epistemic Communities, World Order, and the Creation of a Reflective Research Program," p. 368. According to Adler and Haas, this approach attempts "to bridge the gap

between positivist-empirical and relativist-interpretative phenomenological approaches, ..." Later, they observe that their approach is "structurationist," contending that "just as structures are constituted by the practice and self-understandings of agents, so the influence and interests of agents are constituted and explained by political and cultural structures." (p. 371) For a manageable introduction to some of these ideas and approaches, see Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," *International Security,* Vol. 20, No. 1 (Summer 1995) and Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory," *International Organization,* Vol. 41, No. 3 (Summer 1987).

9. *Ibid.,* p. 374. The diffusion of ideas (including whole ways of understanding) to other states is a particularly important dimension of this understanding. There can be some confusion about whether epistemic communities are fundamentally national or transnational in character. The short answer is that they can be either at different stages in their growth. In some cases they appear to grow first and foremost as national networks, influence national policy in their own state, and then diffuse ideas transnationally. In others, the transnational character of the network may emerge earlier, before substantial influence in any particular state is evident. The latter seems more true for minimalist confidence building-oriented networks, but this will not necessarily be true in other cases. An agnostic view on this count seems most appropriate.

10. Ibid., p. 373.

11. The role of a confidence building-oriented epistemic community *before* this point is unclear and likely non-existent. Indeed, it seems that the initiating ideas for the original Helsinki Final Act's CBMs were distinctly operational in nature, lacked any conceptual support, and were developed primarily within government circles late in the 1950s as an adjunct to technical strategic nuclear arms control-related ideas dealing with surprise attack. Their initial focus was the 1958 Geneva Surprise Attack Conference although others emerged in the Polish Rapaki Plans of 1957 and 1958 and in a few instances of Western academic writing in the early 1960s. See Robin Ranger, *Arms and Politics 1958-1978 — Arms Control in a Changing Political Context* (Toronto: Gage Publishing, 1979), especially Chapter 20, for a brief discussion of this period. There seems to have been little explicit appreciation of a "confidence building approach" at that time. See Johan J. Holst, "Fixed Control Posts and European Stability," *Disarmament and Arms Control* Vol. 2 (Summer 1964) for a partial exception. Also see Alastair Buchan and Philip Windsor, *Arms and Stability in Europe: A British-French-German Enquiry* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1963) for one of the few substantial early examinations of conventional forces arms control in Europe.

12. The author is unaware of any study that has looked into this dimension of the CSCE security experience. Because the importance of the epistemic community approach has only emerged recently in the author's own work, there has been no opportunity to explore this important subject in any depth. A study patterned on Adler's ("The Emergence of Cooperation: National Epistemic Communities and the International Evolution of the Idea of Nuclear Arms Control") would be a substantial contribution to this literature.

It should also be borne in mind, however, that the epistemic community approach is much more important as a *prescriptive* element in the transformation view of confidence building than it is an explanatory element in accounting for the CSCE CSBM history. The existence of a "CSCE confidence building epistemic community" is and ought to be treated as hypothetical at present although there is adequate evidence to believe that this is at least a plausible claim.

13. Regimes and institutions are treated as synonymous concepts in this review. John J. Mearsheimer makes this argument although this is a common practice. See "The False Promise of International Institutions" *International Security,* Vol. 19, No. 3 (Winter 1994/95), p. 8 (note 13).

"Regime" is used in the formal, analytic sense in this review and is derived directly from the classic source — the special regime issue of *International Organization* edited by Stephen D. Krasner (Vol. 36, No. 2 (Spring 1982)). Comparing this definition with that of institutions in the main text should support the claim that these two concepts are very similar. Krasner defines regimes as:

> "sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations. Principles are

> beliefs of fact, causation, and rectitude. Norms are standards of behaviour defined in terms of rights and obligations. Rules are specific prescriptions or proscriptions for action. Decision-making procedures are prevailing practices for making and implementing collective choice. ...
>
> "Regimes must be understood as something more than temporary arrangements that change with every shift in power or interest. ... The purpose of regimes is to facilitate agreements. ...
>
> "It is the infusion of behaviour with principles and norms that distinguishes regime-governed activity in the international system from more conventional activity, guided exclusively by narrow calculations of interest." (pp. 186-187.)

More recent appreciations of the literature can be found in Stephan Haggard and Beth A. Simmons, "Theories of International Regimes" *International Organization,* Vol. 41, No. 3 (Summer 1987), Oran R. Young, "International Regimes: Toward a New Theory" *World Politics,* Vol. XXXIX, No. 1 (October 1986), Oran R. Young, "Politics of International Regime Formation" *International Organization,* Vol. 43, No. 3 (Summer 1989), and Oran R. Young, "Political Leadership and Regime Formation" *International Organization*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (Summer 1991).

The most interesting recent exploration of regime theory in a security context is John S. Duffield, "NATO Force Levels and Regime Analysis," *International Organization,* Vol. 46, No. 4 (Autumn 1992). The Duffield analysis, incidentally, is suggestive of the value that regime theory may hold for understanding confidence building, especially because of the role of cognitive processes in explaining participation in a security regime. Also see Roger K. Smith, "The Non-Proliferation Regime and International Relations," *International Organization,* Vol. 41, No. 2 (Spring 1987). This treatment is also very useful in suggesting how regime analysis can be extended to the confidence building phenomenon.

14. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," p. 7. This article presents an able (if necessarily simplified) discussion of contrasting views about international institutions (as understood by a committed realist) and is an excellent starting point for those interested in exploring this most important subject. Not surprisingly, those whose views Mearsheimer claims to represent have taken exception to some of his characterizations. To gain a fuller understanding of these differing interpretations of institutions, see Robert O. Keohane and Lisa L. Martin, "The Promise of Institutional Theory"; Charles A. Kupchan and Clifford A. Kupchan, "The Promise of Collective Security"; John Gerard Ruggie, "The False Promise of Realism"; Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics"; and Mearsheimer's reply, all in *International Security,* Vol. 20, No. 1 (Summer 1995). Also see Stephen D. Krasner, "Compromising Westphalia," *International Security,* Vol. 20, No. 3 (Winter 1995-96) for a continuing discussion of some of these issues.

15. *Ibid.,* p. 8. Mearsheimer quotes Krasner, *International Regimes* (special issue of *International Organization*).

16. Mearsheimer, "A Realist Reply," p. 82.

17. This is true for three main reasons. This reasoning is important and deserves repeating. First, conventional realist thinking tends not to pay much attention to the *risks* associated with competition and, instead, concentrates on the risks associated with cooperation. However, competition may be *riskier* than cooperation for a variety of sound reasons and, if this is recognized by policy makers, they will see a clear benefit in opting for cooperation (including using institutions or even developing them via approaches like confidence building). The key here is recognizing the relative gains that can occur under conditions of cooperation. Charles L. Glaser, "Realists as Optimists: Cooperation as Self-Help," *International Security,* Vol. 19, No. 3 (Winter 1994/95), pp. 58-60.

Second, it is more accurate to evaluate security in terms of military *capability* than in terms of raw power. Military capability accommodates considerations of relative capacity (including offensive-defensive relationships) to perform important military missions (including effective ways of addressing the security dilemma). Cooperative policy options can, in some cases, improve a state's relative military capability more effectively than can purely competitive (unilateral) options. *(Ibid.,* pp. 60-67.) (The "security dilemma" refers to the tendency for improvements in offensive capability to inadvertently decrease security by triggering offsetting offensive counter-moves by an adversary that actually decrease the ability of the first state to

defend itself. For the standard discussion of this, see Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics,* Vol. 30, No. 2 (January 1978).)

Third, cooperation may be a more effective option if states wish to communicate benign intent. Particularly when offensive capabilities are seen to have an advantage over defensive capabilities (hence represent an attractive unilateral avenue for enhancing security, if increased), cooperative policies that limit offensive capabilities can induce a positive shift in assessments of motivation by potential adversaries. Dangerous states seeking to use their military capabilities for gain will be reluctant to enter into such arrangements because they are counterproductive. *(Ibid.,* pp. 67-70.)

18. Mearsheimer identifies them as "liberal institutionalism," "collective security," and "critical theory." ("The False Promise of International Institutions.") Collective security does not appear to be directly germane to confidence building thinking although it can account for institutions that might operate in parallel with a confidence building regime. Some confusion exists on this count because the CSCE/OSCE has security dimensions beyond confidence building, some of which could be seen to have collective security characteristics (if only in terms of aspiration).

Mearsheimer's treatment of critical theory has been criticized for inappropriately lumping together different schools that have quite distinct perspectives. See Wendt, "Constructing International Politics." In terms of helping to understand confidence building, the most relevant of these schools (including "postmodernism," "constructivism," "neo-Marxism," and "feminism") quite clearly is constructivism. Constructivism and the structurationist approach (after Giddens) can be considered to be approximate synonyms for our purposes in this very elementary introduction.

19. Mearsheimer identifies (with justification) Robert O. Keohane as a principal contributor to this perspective. See, for instance, *International Institutions and State Power* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1989).

20. For the classic articulation of the structurationist perspective applied to international relations, see Alexander E. Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory," *International Organization* Vol.41, No. 3 (Summer 1987) and Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization,* Vol. 46, No. 2 (Spring 1992). Emanuel Adler (see "The Emergence of Cooperation: National Epistemic Communities and the International Evolution of Nuclear Arms Control" discussed in the preceding section) is also a structurationist (p. 103).

At the core of the structurationist vision (and, indeed, virtually all international relations perspectives) is the "agent-structure problem." Wendt describes it in the following way:

> "The agent-structure problem has its origins in two truisms about social life which underlie most social scientific inquiry: 1) human beings and their organizations are purposeful actors whose actions help reproduce or transform the society in which they live; and 2) society is made up of social relationships, which structure the interactions between these purposeful actors. Taken together these truisms suggest that human agents and social structures are, in one way or another, theoretically interdependent or mutually implicating entities. Thus, the analysis of action invokes an at least implicit understanding of particular social relationships (or "rules of the game") in which the action is set — just as the analysis of social structures invokes some understanding of the actors whose relationships make up the structural context. It is then a plausible step to believe that the properties of agents and those of social structures are ***both*** relevant to explanations of social behaviour. ... [the structurationist approach] requires a very particular conceptualization of the agent-structure relationship. This conceptualization forces us to rethink the fundamental properties of (state) agents and [international] system structures. In turn, it permits us to use *agents and structures to explain some of the key properties of each as effects of the other, to see agents and structures as "co-determined" or "mutually constituted" entities."* (Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory," pp.338-339, first emphasis in the original, second emphasis added.)

21. Wendt ("Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics") observes:

> "The debate between "neorealists" and "neoliberals" has been based on a shared commitment to "rationalism." Like all social theories, rational choice directs us to ask some questions and not others, treating the identities and interests of agents as exogenously given and focusing on how the behaviour of agents generates outcomes. As such, rationalism offers a fundamentally behavioral conception of both process and institutions: they change behaviour but not identities and interests. In addition to this way of framing research problems, neorealists and neoliberals share generally similar assumptions about agents: states are the dominant actors in the system, and they define security in "self-interested" terms. Neorealists and neoliberals may disagree about the extent to which states are motivated by relative versus absolute gains, but both groups take the self-interested state as the starting point for theory." (pp. 391-392)

22. Wendt distinguishes between "weak" liberals (those who accept the realist view of institutions' inability to change interests) and "strong" liberals (those who sense that institutions can somehow transform interests and identity). The latter, because they are still bound to the liberal institutionalist perspective, lack a theoretical account of *how* this type of change can occur. *Ibid.*, pp. 392-393.

23. Robert O. Keohane and Lisa L. Martin, "The Promise of Institutional Theory," pp. 41-42.

24. Robert O. Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power,* p. 10, quoted in Keohane and Martin, "The Promise of Institutional Theory," p. 46. This is an example of the "strong" liberal impulse to "bring in sociology" noted by Wendt.

25. Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," pp. 71-72.

26. Rey Koslowski and Friedrich V. Kratochwil, "Understanding Change In International Politics: The Soviet Empire's Demise and the International System," *International Organization,* Vol. 48, No. 2 (Spring 1994), pp. 222-223.

27. Thomas Risse-Kappen's views provide a sympathetic, approximately parallel but "less radical" take on the importance of ideas in changing institutions. See "Ideas Do Not Float Freely: Transnational Coalitions, Domestic Structures, and the End of the Cold War," *International Organization,* Vol. 48, No. 2 (Spring 1994).

28. It might be more accurate to characterize this as a "proto-regime" because it is not clear whether the transformation initiated several years ago in CSCE Europe will evolve into a full security regime or collapse into a "neither fish nor fowl" condition, lacking stark divisions between hostile camps but exhibiting little broad cooperative security behaviour. Patterns are difficult to discern due to four possibly idiosyncratic complicating factors: (1) the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia; (2) the often conflicting efforts of the European Union to create its own broad security environment; (3) the uncertain role of the United States in CSCE/OSCE-European affairs; and (4) the complex, overlapping, and competitive development of NATO. These all undercut the momentum towards a true CSCE security regime.

29. The argument has been made that the regime approach does not work very well in the realm of security relations. The key element underlying this observation is the fundamentally uncooperative nature of security relations in the typically anarchic international system. In the absence of cooperation, it does not make much sense to talk about a formal regime. However, not all security endeavours entail non-cooperative assumptions. The best example of a security-related regime is to be found in Roger K. Smith, "The Non-Proliferation Regime and International Relations," *International Organization* Vol. 41, No. 2 (Spring 1987). This article provides a useful general discussion of the role of regime theory.

Because confidence building entails cooperative principles and shifts in basic perception about the operation of international relations within the security realm, it may also be a good candidate for the application of regime theory. It is the position of this review that it is.

30. Note that confidence building seen through the realist lens does *not* simply devolve into the minimalist understanding of confidence building. The minimalist understanding revolves around enhanced information

and, to a lesser extent, interaction and makes no explicit effort to locate itself in any type of institutionalist context. Nevertheless, there does not seem to be any good reason why the minimalist account could not be viewed in terms of both realist and strong institutionalist (strong liberal and constructivist) perspectives. This would necessitate, however, a great deal more conscious conceptual work on how confidence building works as seen from the information-oriented minimalist point of view. No such effort has as yet been undertaken.

31. "The new international context also imposes 'non-traditional' threats, in particular, threats that transcend political borders and affect whole regions or even the globe. International crime and disease, global warming and mass involuntary migration are examples of the more negative aspects of greater global integration." (Canada, *Canada in the World: Government Statement*, Ottawa: 1995, p.3).

"Comprehensive security" is a broad concept that embraces "economic, social, political and military cooperation; the development of mutual trust through military confidence building and the lowest possible level of armaments; the peaceful settlement of differences; open markets; transnational issues cooperation, such as transportation, communications, energy, science and technology, environmental protection, human migration, combating crime and terrorism; and a preparedness to contribute to security in neighbouring areas." (From an untitled, unofficial Department of Foreign Affairs working paper. This view does not necessarily reflect official Canadian Government policy.)

32. *Verification In All Its Aspects, Including the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Verification,* Report of the Secretary General. General Assembly Document A/50/377 (22 September 1995), p. 18. Emphasis added. Note that this definition is of the verification *process*.

33. Although international agencies and other organizations may perform a compliance assessment and adjudication role, state decision makers are, at least in principle, the final arbiters of compliance decisions. They may lack the resources to make a technical judgement and may rely upon a mediating specialist body to assist in this role, but state decision makers bear the final responsibility for such decisions. This may change in the future and some bodies such as the IAEA already brush up against this distinction.

34. Cooperative monitoring:

> "involves the collection, analysis and sharing of information among parties to an agreement. ... Technologies incorporated into a cooperative monitoring regime must be capable of being shared among all parties, and all parties must receive equal access to data or information acquired by the system. Use of such technologies facilitates implementation of agreements by providing the capability to observe relevant activities, to define and measure agreed-upon parameters, to record and manage information and to carry out inspections using standardized monitoring systems ... . Because it may be shared, the results of cooperative monitoring can have great utility in open discussions of compliance. It should be noted, however, that States that participate in cooperative monitoring arrangements generally retain the right to make compliance decisions themselves, using all available information, whether from shared technologies or national technical means."

From: *Verification In All Its Aspects, Including the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Verification,* p. 74. The cooperative monitoring idea is most directly associated with the Cooperative Monitoring Center of Sandia National Laboratory.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Confidence building, despite its popularity as a promising security management approach, has a relatively limited and poorly understood track record. It appears to have been employed successfully in the CSCE/OSCE case and other apparent but more modest examples can be discerned in application areas from around the world. There is as yet no compelling account in the professional literature of how confidence building has worked in its principal European application example. Policy makers, by and large, are left to emulate the operational example of the CSCE/OSCE's Vienna Documents with their comprehensive array of CBMs and to draw what lessons they can from the general negotiating history of the CSCE/OSCE process. Although there is a sizeable professional literature, it focuses primarily on the operational characteristics of confidence building. The literature lacks conceptually sophisticated accounts able to provide us with a more general understanding of how confidence building can help to improve difficult security relations. Although there is a consensus understanding of what confidence building is, this conventional or minimalist construction is overly operational focussing too much on CBMs, pays little attention to the process dimension of confidence building, and lacks a convincing explanatory core. The inner workings of the confidence building process remain as much a mystery today as they were ten or twenty years ago.

Access to "more information" and the opportunity to "know each other better" — the mainstays of the minimalist approach to understanding confidence building — are inadequate mechanisms by themselves for explaining how difficult security relations can be improved. Although there may be a common sense plausibility to this view of confidence building, it will not stand up to careful analytic scrutiny. The minimalist construction simply cannot explain how confidence building, understood as a deliberate and discrete security management approach, is able to improve the security relations of suspicious states.

The transformation view regards the traditional understanding of confidence building as incomplete and focuses on why and how developing confidence building arrangements can help to improve security relations, whether in ways grand or small. Although it does not dismiss the impact on security relations that CBMs can directly have, the transformation view shifts our primary attention away from operational measures and to the processes associated with their development and application. It sees the power of confidence building residing in the broader processes of creation and implementation rather than exclusively in the operational product of confidence building (i.e., an agreement comprised of CBMs).

While the transformation view sees confidence building as being potentially more powerful than do more traditional accounts, it also sees more limitations constraining the successful application of the confidence building approach, particularly with respect to the importance of supporting conditions. In their absence, the opportunities for successful confidence building will be reduced significantly.

The Transformation View

Confidence building, according to the transformation view, is a distinctive activity undertaken by policy makers with the minimum, explicit intention of improving at least some aspects of a suspicious and traditionally antagonistic security relationship through security policy coordination and cooperation. It entails the comprehensive process of exploring, negotiating, and then implementing measures that promote interaction, information exchange, and constraint. It also

entails the use of both formal and informal practices and principles associated with the cooperative development of CBMs. When conditions are supportive, the confidence building process can *facilitate, focus, synchronize, amplify, and generally structure the potential for a significant positive transformation in the security relations of participating states*. Thus, the confidence building process involves more than simply the production of a confidence building agreement and definitely should not be confused with what CBMs themselves do. The process extends well beyond this operational output. It is also (and more importantly) about *structuring the potential for change in a stressed and suspicious security relationship.*

This is the key to understanding confidence building according to the transformation view. The confidence building process, because of its nature, provides an explicit framework for the development of new security relationships structured at least in part by new, more cooperative rules and practices. Confidence building, because of its basic character, is able to facilitate and structure the potential for change in security relationships when at least some states are dissatisfied with, and beginning to question, *status quo* security policies and approaches. Policy makers do not need to understand this explicitly as they pursue confidence building solutions — although it will help. The transformation view explains why they can be successful in certain circumstances when they attempt to improve security relations by developing cooperative confidence building arrangements.

Transformation

A transformation in security relations is primarily the product of developing, negotiating, and implementing a confidence building agreement and its associated practices and principles when the potential for positive change in a security relationship is emergent. Transformation is an intrinsically psychological and sociological process that involves a positive shift in specialist and policy maker beliefs about (1) the nature of the threat posed by other states, and (2) broader understandings of the nature of security relations and how they work, structured by those beliefs about threat.

It may be profound or (more likely) modest, but the shift in thinking must entail a meaningful positive change where conceptions of threat as well as basic understandings of security relationships snap into a new, more positive focus: cooperation and policy coordination become both thinkable and desirable. It is unlikely to be a consciously motivated process where "transformation" is clearly seen by policy makers to be the goal. It is more likely to be the associated product of more prosaic objectives such as increasing predictability and transparency as well as controlling the risks associated with misperception and unintended conflict. In this process, relationships dominated by distrust become moderated and new, more cooperative practices and principles replace security conceptions now seen to be inadequate. Transformation does not necessarily see adversaries changed into friends overnight, but it does entail at minimum a shift to a more neutral status.

The serious pursuit of legitimate confidence building arrangements, according to the transformation view, is an activity that is particularly well-suited to fostering positive changes in security thinking (transformation) when conditions are supportive. This is due to the activity's basic character and the reinforcing nature of the confidence building measures that comprise an arrangement. The basic character of confidence building is generally cooperative and hence primarily non-zero-sum in nature. This is an essential characteristic of confidence building, a portrayal that most accounts in the professional literature support and many policy makers understand. While the process obviously involves negotiation amongst those embedded in a predominantly adversarial relationship, the main goals are coordination and cooperation, not disadvantaging other participants for purposes of unilateral advantage. Thus, it is a paradigm-shifting rather than paradigm-confirming activity. While negotiations may begin with a

decidedly competitive character, this must change in order for the confidence building process to be successful.

The requirements for successful confidence building basically amount to the opportunity, when conditions are supportive, for interaction amongst officials and experts from participating states, permitting them to formulate and then institutionalize new, more positive ideas defining their security relations and how to maintain them on a generally more cooperative, coordinated basis.

Supporting Conditions

A key aspect of the transformation view is the claim that the success of confidence building depends upon the existence of certain basic supporting conditions. In short, this aspect of the transformation view argues that *the environment must be ready for at least some degree of positive change.* These supporting conditions characterize developments in the way the international security environment is conceived and specify the need for the emergence of key players (both policy makers and experts) capable of acting on these developments. Although exploratory confidence building efforts cannot create these conditions, to a limited extent they can foster them. For instance, epistemic communities and a forum for discussion, can be encouraged by deliberate policy choices.

The transformation view argues that the following conditions must be present within at least most states in a potential application area in order for confidence building efforts to be successful:

(1) The emergence of a sense of "security management fatigue";
(2) A complimentary sense of dissatisfaction with *status quo* security policies;
(3) A sense of concern about the domestic costs of maintaining the *status quo* in security policy;
(4) The existence of an epistemic community able and willing to explore confidence building solutions;
(5) The emergence of a new generation of more flexible mid-level policy makers capable of and willing to embrace new, more cooperative security ideas and with adequate influence to advance these ideas;
(6) A forum for discussion; and
(7) Perhaps, a "leap of faith" initiative by at least one key senior policy maker that is capable of crossing a key emotional and conceptual threshold.

The central theme underlying many of these supporting conditions is a substantial if unfocused unease with *status quo* security conceptions and policies. In addition, there should be no unambiguous consensus belief within any key participating state that threatening neighbours in the potential application area actually continue to entertain hostile intentions. In general, although it may overstate the case somewhat, it seems plausible to argue that there must be a relatively strong developing sense that existing security policies have become part of the problem rather than being a solution to the problem and that this sense be accompanied by a desire (perhaps not articulated explicitly) to "find a way out."

Epistemic Communities

The presence of an effective transnational epistemic community, although perhaps not strictly necessary for the success of confidence building, would appear to be an extremely constructive factor in initiating and structuring the process. A group of recognized experts can provide accessible policy makers who are dissatisfied with the *status quo* with a useful, new understanding of "the problem" and a promising way of addressing it.

These ideas about difficult problems and recommended solutions can diffuse across borders easily when experts groups are transnational. This helps to ensure a uniformity in basic assumptions and shared ways of thinking within a group of potential participating states. These ideas can diffuse into national government bureaucracies because the experts are recognized as having

specialist knowledge that may be helpful to policy makers confronting a difficult security problem.

Official interest in these ideas will be enhanced, of course, if policy makers feel uncertain about the adequacy of current policies for dealing with security relations in the potential application area. Indeed, this is the most likely circumstance defining when policy makers will turn to ideas like confidence building.

The Institutional Dimension of Confidence Building

A particularly important dimension of the transformation view is the proposition that the changes in security thinking facilitated by confidence building (which, according to the transformation view, must occur for confidence building to have any meaning) can become institutionalized in a security regime. The notion of institutionalization is simple yet profound. An institution (or regime) is "a set of rules that stipulate the ways in which states should cooperate and compete with each other."[1]

Because it argues that the most consequential product of a successful confidence building process is a new rule-based security institution, the transformation view makes the most sense when placed in an institutionalist framework. Without at least a modest transformation of basic security expectations flowing from its application, it is difficult to see how confidence building can improve basic security relations beyond superficial levels related to moderately enhanced transparency. Thus, the transformation of at least some basic security assumptions appears essential in order for confidence building to be able to accomplish anything of real consequence. If the changes in security thinking facilitated by the confidence building process are supported by experience, then the changes become increasingly institutionalized in a restructured international security relationship. This restructured relationship redefines expectations of normal behaviour among participating states, marking the end of security relations that are defined primarily by assumptions of basic hostility (at least within this particular realm).

This aspect of the transformation view highlights what the broader product of the confidence building process can be and explains why the various elements of the confidence building process are so important. The new practices and principles (both formal and informal) associated with the confidence building process as well as the changes in ideas about security relations comprise the basis of a security regime. This is what structures the revised regime.

Although there are competing understandings of institutions and the role that they can play, the strong institutionalist view is more helpful in explaining how confidence building can work. The mere fact of honest participation in confidence building that revolves around the development of cooperative principles and practices can change the way participants think about security relations *if* they are ready . The new institution entails a new set of rules that outline the ways in which participating states should cooperate and compete with each other, with a strong emphasis on cooperation. Thus, *confidence building is an agent of change and the resulting regime is an artifact of change that can then continue to operate as an agent of change.*

The transformation view does not constitute a grand theory of international relations, although some effort has been made to place it in the context of broader accounts of international institutions. It is a much more modest and limited conceptual creation. *It focuses on a particular type of activity that can be of value when states that have been locked in a conflictual or suspicious relationship for some time begin to recognize that their security relationships are based on principles and practices that no longer seem adequate.* The transformation view does not hold that confidence building is a panacea for all security problems, only that it can help to change security relationships in constructive ways under some circumstances.

Further Application and Development: Problems and Prospects

Without doubt, great hopes are attached to the possibilities of confidence building in many parts of the world, particularly in light of the apparent success enjoyed in CSCE/OSCE during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The prospects for developing effective confidence building arrangements in new application areas, perhaps patterned broadly on the European model, are promising. If the same or similar sorts of positive change can be fostered and institutionalized in other application areas, the confidence building approach will prove to be both powerful and general.

However, this potential cannot be realized unless a policy-relevant and conceptually sound understanding of the confidence building process and how it works animates these efforts. Relying on the existing literature's minimalist conception of confidence building with its tendency to reify the operational content of confidence building measures as the essence of "confidence building" is unlikely to prove an adequate guide to action. This traditional view tends to recommend simply assembling standard CBMs. However, it does not speak to the conditions that should be in place for effective confidence building to occur and lacks a convincing account of why adopting these measures will improve security relations.

Efforts to "reinvent the wheel" in new application areas — to develop "confidence building" ideas and approaches more-or-less from scratch — are also unlikely to prove particularly helpful. Such efforts tend to ignore the implicit influence of existing (typically minimalist) conceptions and risk building into new accounts the same problems that plague existing ones. This tendency also slights the store of valuable insights available in the existing literature, including discussions of issues such as that presented in this review. Relying on open-ended understandings where confidence building can mean virtually anything will also prove to be unhelpful in developing effective policy. This approach loses all contact with any underlying conceptual ideas about why and how confidence building can improve security relations.

Although a certain degree of caution guarding against the thoughtless adoption of potentially idiosyncratic Western security management ideas is both understandable and appropriate, analysts and policy makers in other regions should be careful to avoid dismissing useful policy ideas that have a sound conceptual foundation. Without a solid, causally-aware understanding of the confidence building process and how it can change security relations, we will have little idea of how to transfer and modify the generalized experience of Europe to other parts of the world and to other types of security relationships. And the European experience *is* the primary case that we have to inform our understanding of the phenomenon, so it should not be ignored. This is a very important point, particularly as other regions approach the threshold of significant security breakthroughs of their own.

To the extent that other examples of successful confidence building do emerge, they should also be examined very carefully so that we can amend our existing (CSCE/OSCE-oriented) understanding of how confidence building works. The recent apparent success of Russian and Chinese negotiators in developing a comprehensive confidence building regime for their border region is a good example of such a case.[2] If the lessons of this and other potentially important cases are not analyzed in a thorough fashion, their analytic and policy-prescriptive value will be diminished significantly.

The tendency for policy makers and analysts to use "confidence building" in unorthodox ways or to slight the need to associate "confidence building" with a conceptual foundation that can explain how and under what circumstances it can work is a special problem that deserves further comment. Policy makers, in particular, are prone to resist too-formal and rigid an approach to confidence building, preferring to employ a very flexible understanding that focuses on common sense propositions about the virtues of enhanced

transparency, predictability, and familiarity. Policy makers, of course, are free to use policy approaches in any way they see fit, tailoring these approaches to their understanding of their particular problems. And they will do so unless they are provided with a convincing contrary rationale. This is both appropriate and sensible. However, this preference, often supported by policy-oriented analysts, tends to overlook the importance of the existing "embedded meaning" residing in the confidence building concept.

Embedded meaning refers to the claim that a policy-relevant concept (confidence building in this case) is understandable and fully useable only if it is associated with a clear conceptual understanding that can explain how it works and under what circumstances. And that understanding must be derived from practical experience, appropriately interpreted and generalized. Stripped of its embedded meaning, the policy concept risks becoming a rhetorical device that can mean everything – and nothing – and it risks becoming divorced from practical advice about how to make it work effectively.

Genuine confidence building, according to the argument underlying this report, should not be seen as a *tabula rasa* with no intrinsic meaning. A comprehensive confidence building approach works *because it facilitates certain changes in security relationships under certain conditions*. If policy makers wish to use the confidence building approach with any hope of real change in security relations, they must be familiar with the essentials of the approach – or rely upon those who are for advice. In this respect, confidence building ought to be seen as being as demanding as many other types of national policy approach. Although it would be an exaggeration to suggest that we know as much about confidence building as we do about various types of economic development policy, for instance, the basic point is still valid. Responsible and effective policy makers apply economic policies with due regard to what those policies are expected to achieve, how they must be implemented, and with a sensitivity for the basic conditions that must be in place for them to work or they risk dramatic failure. The same should apply when it comes to the use of approaches such as confidence building. This view also should provide a further incentive to explore the conceptual underpinnings of confidence building and how it works.

Finally, policy makers and analysts should appreciate that the attention devoted in this report to understanding what confidence building means should not be mistaken for a desire to ensure the definitional purity of confidence building on the author's own terms. Nor should it be seen as an unwillingness to accept the use of alternative terms for this approach. This is looking at the wrong side of the equation. It is not the term that is all-important, it is the understanding of the processes represented by the term that warrants attention. Although it may be harmless to substitute another term or expression for "confidence building," this does tend to encourage an even greater disconnect between the name for a policy approach and a functionally-oriented account of how it works and what it requires for success. This is likely to exacerbate an already unwelcome tendency toward imprecision and causal indifference with unfortunate consequences for effective policy. Adopting an overly flexible understanding of what can count as "confidence building" may also be unhelpful because it can encourage the use of traditional confidence building arrangements patterned superficially on the successful European experience to attain unilateral advantages in a way that subverts the broader intent of confidence building.

Having outlined a case for why it is important to ensure that confidence building efforts be informed by a sound conceptual foundation, it is necessary to stress again that confidence building appears to be a dynamic security management approach. As we come to understand it better in a variety of application contexts, we may wish to revise our understanding of what it entails and how it works. Each new application of confidence

building may differ in one or more key ways, obliging us to reconsider what we once thought was essential to its basic functional character. The transformation view is relatively well-suited to this because it places confidence building within a broader institutional framework and separates the development of measures from the processes associated with their development. The development and implementation processes become more important than the measures in this view. This means that we can more easily think about forms of "confidence building" that revolve around non-traditional measures addressing non-traditional security concerns. Just as important, we can begin to think about other types of multilateral policy activity that may share important functional characteristics with more traditional forms of confidence building. One attractive possibility is the case of efforts to expand non-traditional security regimes that already exhibit cooperative characteristics.

Thus, in our efforts to develop more effective, policy-relevant understandings of confidence building, we must be careful to balance two, diverse concerns. On the one hand, we should ensure that these understandings have a sound conceptual foundation that can provide practical policy guidance for policy makers. On the other hand, we should try to remain open-minded about new confidence building possibilities and new interpretations of how particular confidence building processes actually function. This will prove to be both challenging and rewarding.

Policy Implications

A number of policy implications flow from the transformation view of confidence building.

(1) Understand the Opportunities and Limitations of Confidence Building

Confidence building is potentially more powerful in changing security relationships than many policy makers may appreciate, but sponsors and participants will be more likely to enjoy success when they have a clearer, conceptually-based understanding of how it works and under what circumstances. Confidence building should be seen as a valuable policy option with specific requirements, objectives, and associated methods capable of achieving those objectives; all of which require clear articulation. This is the most general and important policy implication, subsuming the more specific implications discussed below.

(2) Distinguish Between Confidence Building Process and CBMs

Policy makers should not mistake the adoption of CBM-like measures for confidence building. The latter clearly is a *process* and should not be equated directly with CBMs and what they do. It is the process dimension of confidence building that helps policy makers to restructure security relationships, rendering them more cooperative in character and less likely to lead to conflict and misperception. As a result, policy makers should concentrate increasingly on identifying when change is possible and on developing cooperative security arrangements when conditions are supportive. They should concentrate less on CBM package design, which will flow naturally from the effort to develop cooperative solutions. Analysts should concentrate more on understanding the role of supporting conditions and on explaining the nature of the confidence building process rather than focussing on CBMs and what they do.

(3) Encourage Policy Relevant Research

The tendency to misunderstand what confidence building is and how it works is a direct result of the lack of a conceptually-based understanding of confidence building in the professional literature or in the policy community. Thus, another important policy implication is the need for analysts to develop better accounts of this security management approach and for policy makers to draw on these accounts.

These accounts, like the transformation view advocated in this report, need to be sensitive to causal issues and must try to avoid over-concentrating on CBMs as the essence of confidence

building. Analysts also need to strive for generality, even as they infer lessons from specific cases particularly the rich history of the CSCE/OSCE. In the absence of a carefully generalized account, it becomes too easy to dismiss confidence building as an idiosyncratic Western product with only limited relevance in other parts of the world. Growing out of this concern, however, accounts of confidence building should be open to the experience of other application contexts. Finally, in their efforts to develop accounts that have policy relevance, analysts should be careful to highlight the sorts of conditions that should exist before confidence building is attempted and to identify key processes that must occur in order for meaningful changes in security relations to result.

A better understanding by policy makers of the strengths and limitations of confidence building is essential to ensure that they make the most productive use of this security management approach and do not become disillusioned because of the approach's misapplication. Fostering this understanding requires more policy-relevant research including case studies of new application examples as well as generic studies of the confidence building process itself. Policy makers and analysts, particularly in new regional application areas, need to work closely to ensure that the explanations of confidence building make sense from a policy perspective and accurately capture what really occurs during successful confidence building. *Confidence Building in the Arms Control Process: A Transformation View* suggests some of the issues that should concern analysts and policy makers as they pursue this goal.

In efforts to develop more effective, policy-relevant understandings of confidence building, two diverse concerns must be carefully balanced . On the one hand, these understandings should have a sound conceptual foundation that can provide practical guidance for policy makers. On the other hand, analysts and policy makers should try to remain open-minded about new confidence building possibilities and new interpretations of how particular confidence building processes actually function.

In a related vein, the transformation view suggests that we should be open to exploring the connections between traditional confidence building and approaches that seek to develop similar functional results in the realm of non-traditional security concerns. In this context, we should also be willing to explore approaches that seek to expand existing security institutions that already exhibit substantial cooperation and coordination in both the traditional and non-traditional security realms.

(4) Recognize the Importance of Supporting Conditions and Foster Them Where Possible

Perhaps one of the most important policy implications to emerge from the transformation view is the need to appreciate that confidence building will work *only* when the necessary supporting conditions exist. This means that confidence building cannot be imposed before potential participants are ready for change. Vigorous and perhaps well-intentioned efforts to encourage confidence building solutions — particularly ones that concentrate on the *use* of CBMs rather than encourage a confidence building process — are unlikely to be successful. Analysts should work diligently to identify the exact nature of these supporting conditions and whether they can be encouraged by state or non-state actors. Some conditions may be more amenable to influence than others. A corollary deriving from the importance of these supporting conditions and the limited ability to influence some of them is that the timing of confidence building initiatives matters very much.

The supporting conditions discussed in Chapter 4 include:

(1) A sense of "security management fatigue";
(2) A more focused sense of unease with *status quo* security policies;

(3) A more diffuse sense of concern about the primarily domestic costs of maintaining the *status quo* in security policy;
(4) The existence of a epistemic community (i.e., a transnational group of security experts) cutting across government and academic lines, able and willing to explore and promote confidence building ideas;
(5) The existence of flexible and sophisticated mid-level policy makers in key ministries willing to embrace more cooperative security ideas and with adequate influence to advance these ideas;
(6) The existence of forums for discussion to act as focuses for further explorations and constructive interaction; and
(7) Perhaps, a "leap of faith" initiative by one or more key senior decision makers that is capable of crossing a key emotional and conceptual threshold.

(5) Encourage Development of Expert Groups and Discussion Forums

Encouraging epistemic community development is one area where potential participants and interested third parties can influence the supporting conditions necessary for successful confidence building. The process of encouraging national and regional experts groups itself can also help policy makers to recognize emerging dissatisfaction with *status quo* security policy approaches. Thus, encouraging epistemic community development can indirectly affect the emergence of some other supporting conditions.

Experts groups (epistemic communities) appear to be very important for the successful development of confidence building processes. The transformation view certainly accords them a central role. They represent an effective way to ensure that policy makers, dissatisfied with *status quo* security policies, have access to new ideas about how to restructure unsatisfactory security relations. They also represent an extremely effective way to ensure that potential participants in different states have access to common understandings of security problems and proposed solutions such as confidence building. The development of governmental links to these experts groups is critical. Involving military officers and defence officials in discussions would seem to be particularly advantageous. In addition, regional experts groups should be encouraged because measures, to be relevant, must be designed so that they have meaning in the context of the particular characteristics of the region's security environment.

Expert communities as well as government officials require forums -- both formal and informal -- where they can interact and develop new ideas. The development of such forums is another supporting condition for the confidence building process that seems likely to be amenable to deliberate influence, either by potential participants or interested third parties.

(6) A Role for Interested Third Parties

Policy makers may sometimes not realize that their country is approaching a stage in its security relations with other states where successful confidence building may be possible and beneficial. This means that there may be a special role for interested third parties to help encourage the development of genuine epistemic communities or discussion forums. The United Nations is already embarked on this course. Research organizations and interested governments with some competence in this area might also make a deliberate effort to promote the further development of confidence building thinking and its promotion across borders. There is great potential in this idea. Modest investments now may make a vast difference in promoting the opportunities for improved security relations in many parts of the world.

International organizations, interested states, and research entities might actively promote workshops and seminars where experts and government officials can develop a keener understanding of

how confidence building works. They could help acquaint interested states and regional experts with various cost-effective, operational approaches such as cooperative monitoring that can play a useful role in supporting both traditional and non-traditional confidence building efforts.

Conclusion

The generic study of confidence building itself is also far from complete. Much remains unclear about how the process of confidence building actually functions and what role it plays in changing the way people think about each other and the threats that they pose.The transformation view encourages us to break away from existing, rather limited ideas about confidence building while still attempting to impose greater conceptual rigor on our explanatory efforts. For instance, we need to understand in explicit terms how and under what circumstances the development, negotiation, and implementation of CBMs contributes to a process of security environment improvement.

It is quite likely that we will have a clearer sense of the potential of confidence building only as we explore its applicability in distinctively new application areas and study how it has been pursued in new contexts. This will expand our base of experience significantly. The vigorous participation of interested analysts and policy makers from various potential application areas throughout the world will doubtless help to move this process of understanding forward in many important ways.

ENDNOTES

1. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," p. 8.

2. "Agreement between the Russian Federation, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan and the People's Republic of China on Confidence Building in the Military Field in the Border Area" of 26 April 1996.

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N°. 6 *The Converging Roles of Arms Control Verification, Confidence-Building Measures, and Peace Operations: Opportunities for Harmonization and Synergies*, by Patricia Bliss McFate, Douglas A. Fraser, Sidney N. Graybeal and George R. Lindsey, October 1994.

N°. 7 *Verification in a Global Context: The Establishment and Operation of a United Nations Centre for Information, Training and Analysis (CITA)*, by Patricia Bliss McFate, F. Ronald Cleminson, Sidney N. Graybeal, and George R. Lindsey, February 1996.

The graphic on the back cover is based on an ancient Egyptian hieroglyph representing the all-seeing eye of the powerful sky god Horus. Segments of this "eye in the sky" became hieroglyphic signs for measuring fractions in ancient Egypt. Intriguingly, however, the sum of the physical segments adds up to only 63/64 and, thus, never reaches the equivalent of the whole or perfection. Similarly, verification is unlikely to be perfect.

Today, a core element in the multilateral arms control verification process is likely to be the unintrusive "eye in the sky," or space-based remote sensing system. These space-based techniques will have to be supplemented by a package of other methods of verification such as airborne and ground-based sensors as well as some form of on-site inspection and observations. All these physical techniques add together, just as the fractions of the eye of Horus do, to form the "eye" of verification. Physical verification, however, will not necessarily be conclusive and there is likely to remain a degree of uncertainty in the process. Adequate and effective verification, therefore, will still require the additional, non-physical element of judgment, represented by the unseen fraction of the eye of Horus.

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

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